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GEORGE, 4TH EARL OF ABERDEEN, K.G., K.T.

In the uniform of Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire.

From a picture painted by Sir John Watson Gordon, A.R.A., as a Presentation portrait from the Town Council of Aberdeen, now hanging in the Town and County Hall, Aberdeen. A copy of this picture, by Mr. Robert Munro, is in the Melvin Hall, Tarves. The ceremony of presentation took place on October 9, 1854, when also an Address was presented by the Lord Provost and Town Council.

THE  
LIFE OF GEORGE  
FOURTH EARL OF ABERDEEN  
K.G., K.T.

BY  
LADY FRANCES BALFOUR  
LL.D., D.Litt.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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## CHAPTER VII

"EAST, WEST, HAME'S BEST"

(1828-1838)

"They grew in beauty side by side,  
They filled one home with glee.

And parted thus they rest who played  
Beneath the same green tree,  
Whose voices mingled as they prayed  
Around one parent knee."

HEMANS.

IN the chapter that dealt with the Foreign Office, no allusion was made to the home policy during these years. Lord Aberdeen's interest was by tradition and by official work almost always concentrated on the foreign policy of the Government of which he was a member. Two great measures were passed through Parliament by the Wellington Government, and both of them had his warmest sympathy. The Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was in entire accord with his tolerant views, and he had advocated for long the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities.

He was in a different position from some of his colleagues, having nothing to recant and no pledges to violate. The Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel had changed their views, and, though they did not attain to his outlook, still it gave him unmixed pleasure that he could work cordially with them.

On the question of Reform he held moderate views. He did not wish to dissociate himself from his party, and he was not in sympathy with the extreme reformers. He remembered the early school in which he was reared, and often repeated that Pitt had been convinced there must be considerable reforms made in Parliamentary representation.

He laid the scheme aside, thinking it unsuitable during the progress of a great war. In his own mind, it was not abandoned, but only deferred as among the schemes he hoped to carry out in the years which were cut short by his early death. Lord Aberdeen contemplated some change, but he was unprepared for that set forth in Lord John Russell's Bill. He thought that it would destroy the existing aristocratic Constitution, and he did not share Lord Grey's belief that Reform would do little to impair the influence of the House of Lords. Still less did he take the view of the Radicals, that the nation would benefit by the destruction of the aristocratic influence.

He had learned from his acquaintance with foreign affairs that the omission to make reforms in due season had brought on the Revolution in France in 1830, and that had these reforms been effected in time the change might not have been so revolutionary in character.

His views commended themselves neither to reformers nor to anti-reformers. He thought the Lords should reject the Bill, and that in doing so the Peers should utter a solemn warning and protest. Should the Commons again return the Reform Bill to the Lords, he thought the Upper House should accept it and face the consequences. He foresaw that in the future the duties of the House of Lords would be only those of revision and checking decisions which it could no longer reverse.

Lord Grey in his correspondence with Madame de Lieven sneered at what seemed to him Lord Aberdeen's strange notions. The Tories saw in the suggestion of ultimate acquiescence a cowardly abandonment of the coequal right of the Lords to reject any measure of the Commons of which they disapproved; and the Radicals criticised what they regarded as the apparent absurdity of any man opposing in the first instance a measure which he was prepared ultimately to allow to pass.

With characteristic indifference, Lord Aberdeen took no trouble to explain, except to very few, the

grounds of his opinion, and, as far as the world was concerned, took refuge in the ancient motto carved on the Marischal College of Aberdeen: “They say!—What say they?—Let them say.”

He was not prepared for the declaration made by the Duke of Wellington on November 2, 1830. He often referred to it, and said, had the Duke spoken before to him on the subject, he thought he might have prevented him from uttering the idolatrous eulogy he then pronounced on the unreformed Parliament.

The Duke when on his legs, if he praised at all, was wont to deal in superlatives. Services which he commended were always ranked as among the most remarkable he had ever known, and the institutions to which he belonged were apt to be described as faultless.

When the Duke sat down, he turned to Lord Aberdeen, who was beside him, and said: “I have not said too much, have I?” Lord Aberdeen put his chin forward with a gesture habitual to him when much moved, and only replied: “*You’ll hear of it!*” On leaving the House, he was asked what the Duke had said. “He said that we were going out,” was his answer. From that speech, Lord Aberdeen considered the doom of the Cabinet certain. It fell a fortnight later, on November 16, 1830.

Commenting on this episode, Mr. Gladstone says: “He did hear of it! England and Europe heard of it, and history has caught, and will hold the echo.”

In 1832, on the resignation of Lord Grey, due to a temporary check in the progress of the Reform Bill, the Duke of Wellington was asked to form a Government. Lord Aberdeen was requested by him to take the Foreign Office. On the ground of principle, he had no objection to joining the Government, but he predicted, what a few days showed to be true, that the attempt at the moment was impossible.

In less than a week the Duke gave up the effort. Lord Aberdeen, having consented to be in a Govern-



ment which was to have accepted the Reform Bill, thought it would be inconsistent in him to oppose the further progress of the measure.

He retired to Scotland, where the Reform Bill had effected a more complete revolution than in England. The electoral system hitherto in force had only given the landed proprietors votes for the County members, while the town councils returned the Borough members.

The popular franchise established by the Reform Bill in no way altered Lord Aberdeen's supremacy in his own county. His brother, Captain William Gordon, who had represented the county since 1818, was, on the dissolution, re-elected by a large majority to the first reformed Parliament.

On October 25 Lord and Lady Aberdeen were present at Gordon Castle, at the marriage of Lord Abercorn to Lady Louisa Russell, daughter of the Duke of Bedford. Lord Abercorn had just attained his majority, and this marriage gave them the liveliest pleasure. It was the commencement of a happy union of more than fifty years' duration.

But this was only a transient gleam of brightness amid the anxieties and sorrows of Lord Aberdeen's domestic life, as to which, since his acceptance of office in 1828, we have been silent, and to which we must now return.

When in 1828 he took office he wrote to Mr. Hope :

*Priory, Jan. 27, 1828.*

DEAR HOPE,

I am much obliged to you for your good wishes, although I do not know that my appointment to a seat in the Cabinet is any matter of congratulation. To the Publick it is certainly none; and the present situation of my family is such as to render any interference with my domestick occupations extremely painful. I think we shall be stronger in the country than in Parliament; although I believe

there is no reason to entertain any apprehension. The disunion of the late Cabinet, which in fact was defeated without hostile attack, ought to be a lesson to us. But the real difficulties of the country are so great that I know not if any degree of vigour and union can overcome them.

The reference in this letter that his domestic affairs made acceptance of office extremely painful was a very distant allusion to the deep sorrows which overhung for the second time Lord Aberdeen’s home.

The last of Lady Aberdeen’s three daughters, Lady Alice, had shared the delicacy of health which had deprived him early of her two beautiful sisters. We find him every year travelling to some part of the Continent, and reporting to the second Lady Aberdeen the anxious symptoms of his daughter’s health. In 1827 there was a temporary improvement, and there was hope that she might outgrow her constitutional malady. It is sad to read the correspondence in the faded ink, which told of the approaching end of this young girl, who appears to have been exceptionally endowed in mind as in body. Tragic also, to read of the treatment which in the light of modern science seemed to give the least possible chance of recovery.

Just as Lord Aberdeen took office, the last stages of her illness set in. Every spare moment of her father’s time was passed beside her. He acted as physician as well as parent. It is recorded: “His first enquiry and first visit on returning from the Foreign Office or the House were for her.” All that skill and nursing could do was done. She lingered till April, 1829, and at the age of twenty passed away in his arms, where she had lain for many previous hours.

For some days afterwards he shut himself up at the Foreign Office, and remained absolutely alone. For ten years with unremitting anxiety he had

watched over this, the last of his children by "his Catherine." Through the lingering decline of their young lives, one by one, after pain and weakness, he had seen the delight of his eyes pass from him.

"I have known many sorrows," he wrote from his solitude, and the natural deep reserve of his character found no expression for such grief. Many years after, when the golden haze of time had laid a softening finger on his losses, he expressed in writing, to one who had done much to comfort him, the faith that was in him: "Submission to the will of God, I believe to be the most difficult, as it is also the most indispensable of Christian duties."<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the death of Lady Alice, the health of Lady Aberdeen began to fail, and after a long and painful illness she died in 1833. She was, Lord Stanmore says, "truly and long lamented, and her loss cast an additional shade of gloom over the remaining years of an already overclouded life."

The year that Lady Alice died, Lady Aberdeen's youngest son was born. To him Lord Aberdeen at once transferred something of the love he had given to his daughter. The child was very delicate, and after Lady Aberdeen's death, as the youngest, frailest, and most helpless of her children, he became the object of his father's tenderest care. It was probably owing to this watchful care that an ailing, suffering boy grew up a vigorous youth, and became a strong, healthy man.

Arthur Gordon's mother had only one daughter, Lady Frances. In the spring following her mother's death she also died, in her sixteenth year. This was a culminating blow to Lord Aberdeen.

After the death of Lady Frances, the last of a band of rarely beautiful children, the Princess Lieven offered to come and visit him at the Priory. His old and intimate friendship with her made her think it might be an alleviation to his loneliness. To her he answered:

<sup>1</sup> Letter to his daughter-in-law, Lady Haddo.



*Priory, April 27, 1834.*

I thank you, my dear Princess, and am grateful for your friendship.

You must not think me churlish, or insensible, if I shun society at this moment. There are some misfortunes which are too great for speech, but those, great as they are, must be endured, and endured too, if possible, with fortitude and with resignation. At all events, I must entreat you to believe that I am fully alive to the kindness of your sympathy. If I say but little on the subject, you will not therefore think of me unfavourably, for you know me well enough to be perfectly aware that loud demonstration and abundant professions are very imperfect evidence of what is really felt.

To his friend, Mr. Gurney, he wrote as much as he could bring himself to say to anyone :

*Sept. 10, '33.*

From no man could a letter such as you have written to me be less necessary than from you, for of no man’s cordial sympathy could I feel more certain than of yours. As you have written I must thank you which I do very sincerely. I am quite unable however to write upon the subject of your letter. “Vexed with many storms,” I have only to submit; “It is the Lord.” Whether I may be able to profit by these dispensations I dare not venture to say, but with the blessing of God I will not entirely despair. To the kindness of a few friends, and they are but few, I am not insensible.

“The distant part of the country” was his own estates and home. There he retired after the defeat of the Wellington Government in 1830, corresponding with his friends, but chiefly occupied

with the improvement of his park and pleasure grounds.

These were no longer the dreary waste which thirty years earlier they had been. Plantations were everywhere assuming the character of woods; a stately avenue, a mile in length, stretched from the house to a hill in the deer park.<sup>1</sup> A large lake had taken the place of a morass. Roads intersected the grounds in every direction, and the flower-beds and terraces were bright with colour. In the house itself much had been done in the way of addition and alteration, which now rendered it, if not a first-class house, at least a very habitable one. On the estates, evidences of the improvements which had been prosecuted with untiring vigour for thirty years were on all sides to be seen. The ruinous "farm-town" of 1800 had been replaced on many of the nine hundred farms by a comfortable and substantial house and farm buildings of granite. But, much as had been done, there were still mosses to drain and wastes to plant, and much other work yet to accomplish.

Constant allusions to his operations occur in Lord Aberdeen's correspondence during these years, and, though he sometimes reflected on the gloom and rigour of his climate, there is little doubt that his affections had taken root in that austere land, which he had set himself to occupy and reclaim in the spirit of a faithful lover of his country. To Madame de Lieven he wrote, with a grim humour mixed with the sadness of his own experience:

Should you really ever think of visiting the gloom of my fir woods, you may depend on a cordial reception from their owner; but that is all—there is no society, no amusement, no occupation. Nature itself is unkind, and offers no charms. Had it not been the home of my family for five hundred years it would have no attractions even for me.

<sup>1</sup> At the end of his life he told Bishop Wilberforce that he had planted about 14,000,000 trees.

Writing to Mr. Gurney from Brighton, where he had gone with Lady Alice in October of 1820, he says :

If your journey to Scotland takes place I can only say that you will be an object of envy to me, perhaps for such a cause you may think strange enough; yet in fact there is nothing of the kind which would give me so much pleasure, and if I could feel tolerably easy with respect to those who remained behind me nothing would prevent my starting instantly. Few things surprise me more than the total difference of taste which prevails on this subject among persons of similar condition; and it is lucky that even an approach to an agreement of opinion is not necessary, for I must confess that without being indifferent to the pleasures of cultivated society, or the pursuits connected with it, I look on the appearance even of my Aberdeenshire home with real delight.

And, again, he writes in 1836 :

I congratulate you on resuming the trowel; bricks and mortar are my delight, and I am never so happy as when building.

It was a very different countryside from that to which he had come in his early manhood, and it must have been with a pardonable pride that he looked over “the waste places,” and saw how much his care and money had produced, and how greatly he had raised the standard of civilisation among those who were his dependents and tenants.

“For myself,” he wrote, “what shall I say? I believe that work is happiness or at least it does much to relieve wretchedness in this lower world. Free labour is a chimera, it must be compulsory, as agreeable as you please, but a treadmill rather than none !”



Once again he wrote to Mr. Gurney—at the end of 1833, when he was to be called back into the arena of public affairs, which had left him with no illusions, only the sense of duty that ruled and subdued personal inclination unto itself:

*Dec. 14. 1833.*

Your account of the “worshipful” (*i.e.* the Antiquarian Society) may be considered good and prosperous. I see no drawback, except that you appear to be more strongly impressed with the moderate folly of their pursuits. In this respect I cannot help you, for there is nothing to be said. But, their folly is innocent and we may rather be permitted to laugh than to scold. After all, what is the great difference on the score of wisdom between the laborious trifling of our worthy colleagues and the employments of that busy world whom doubtless we ought to call idlers too? Nothing has made itself more plain to my mind than the emptiness and vanity of all our pursuits in this world and their perfect equality with reference to the grand object of life which is the preparation of leaving it.

You speak of the approach of age and that you see its marks on all around you. I do not feel much of this. I see that my head is growing grey and that I am more sensible to various ailments, but essentially I feel as young as ever, too much so, I fear, a great deal.

I am glad to hear your favourable account of the internal state of the country with respect to manufactures and commerce. As usual you growl and say it will not last, but in the meantime it will give us quiet.

I see that Parliament is to meet on the 4th of Feb., but the prospect does not delight or attract me.

I hope to linger here and to leave Legitimists and Illegitimists to settle their own affairs. It is likely

that the House of Commons will be much more occupied with domestic matters than with foreign affairs. The less they or any of us meddle with the latter the better. . . .

It was very kind of you to write to me about my son at Cambridge, and the account which you sent me as you expected gave me real pleasure, I may truly say ten times as much as the fall of the Whig Ministry. I am going to London because the Duke has desired me to do so, but for what purpose I am not at all certain. It may possibly end in my being again in office and if he and Peel should wish it, I will not decline, but if I accept it will be with very different feelings from those which I entertained seven years ago.

What do you mean by preaching peace? It would almost appear that you thought these Whigs had rescued the country from a state of war. Now I will venture to assert that when I left the Foreign Office this country was on a footing of greater friendship with every power in Europe including France than it is at this moment. You forget that we never had any war or any chance of war. The present French connection is like an ill-assorted marriage. The parties cannot separate, they pass their lives in a perpetual wrangle. You need not be afraid of war whatever other fears you may indulge.

TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Haddo, Sept. 26, 1832.*

Your letter, Dear Princess, was at once a pleasure and a surprise. At this great distance from the civilised world, I could not possibly expect that you should at all recollect me; and your recollection of me is the more disinterested, because, although you are kind enough to desire me to write to you, it is quite clear that you cannot hope to receive

any communication which should repay the trouble of reading. Is it reasonable to suppose that it can give you any satisfaction to know how many herons I have killed with my hawks or how many grouse I have killed with my gun?

There seems to be great difference of opinion respecting the probability of Parliament meeting again before its dissolution; and I do not know for what purpose this meeting should take place, unless the authors of the Reform Bill find it necessary to make their work still more mischievous before it comes into full operation.

It is vain to conjecture what may be the present aspect of the Belgian question. Your letter was quite pacifick, and only complained of the reluctance of Leopold to listen to the recommendations of the conference.

The newspapers now tell me that you are all united against the King of the Netherlands, and that France and England are to be the joint executioners of the iniquitous decree. How this can be, after what has taken place recently, surpasses my comprehension; but when the object is to make our Ministers the dupes of French intrigue, or the instruments of revolutionary injustice, all things are easy.

I believe the King will take good care to have his people unanimously with him in all his decisions; in which case, it is not unlikely that he may be able so to influence events as ultimately to succeed in obtaining everything that is just and reasonable. . . .

I thank you very much for all you have told me on these matters. Now and then, the Duke writes to me a letter of political news and speculation; but otherwise I hear so little that is authentick, my attention is more generally turned to other pursuits.

ABERDEEN.



TO THE SAME

*Haddo, Nov. 1833.*

I think I am one of your oldest friends in this country; and to know that I continue to preserve a place in your esteem will always afford me the greatest satisfaction.

The meeting of the Emperors gave me more satisfaction than any publick event which has recently taken place; because it held out the prospect of arresting the progress of revolution in Europe; and by establishing a perfectly good understanding between the two Princes, gave each of them additional means of preserving the general peace and safety. It is on the cordial and intimate union of the Northern Powers that the chance is afforded of preserving the tranquility and happiness of Europe against the disorganising and revolutionary policy of the present Governments of England and France. The present Government of England is revolutionary by choice; that of France, by necessity. I lament that a new field of action is opened to their destructive intrigues in the Peninsula. The change in the law of succession by Ferdinand has been most unfortunate in its consequences. We are to recollect however, that when this change was first promulgated the French revolution had not taken place, otherwise it is probable that Ferdinand would not have adopted the measure. Had it been carried into effect with Charles X on the French throne, and the D. of Wellington at the head of the English administration, it would have proved advantageous to Spain. We should have seen all the reforms and improvements introduced of which that country is in need, and is desirous. They would have been introduced without danger or difficulty. We should only have seen a Carlist opposition of no great importance; and

the protest of that worthy gentleman Louis Philippe, who would then have been the ally of Don Carlos.

At present, it is not easy to trust the Queen, or rather those by whom she is most efficiently supported; and an enemy of revolution is almost compelled to look favourably to the cause of Don Carlos, in spite of his bigotry and his Jesuitism. . . .

It is impossible to speak of Spain, and the Spanish people, without interest; but you must not think me a very warm politician. You used to be incredulous when I assured you of my indifference about returning to office; and you may perhaps be still more so, when I say that the most important events, both at home and abroad have lost much of that attraction which they formerly possessed. You will think me a dolt and a barbarian, fit only to live in seclusion; but at all events, I hope you will consider me not as an Ex-Minister, or as a candidate for office, but as an old friend. In that capacity, I shall always be anxious to assure you of my sincere attachment.

ABERDEEN.

Writing to Princess Lieven of his return to London in March of 1834 he says :

It is very true that such a place as London must always present objects of interest, even to those who profess, and who feel, the greatest indifference. No man who has ever been concerned in publick affairs can look at the present state of the world without curiosity at least.

We are all in a state which everyone must feel to be *provisional*. In England, we appear to be going on smoothly enough; but where we are going to, who can tell? Or, how much of everything is undermined, beyond all power of propping up.



Your short budget of foreign news is the most agreeable I have seen for a long while. It embraces everything, and everything is good. I hope you may be right in all your estimates; Evil may prevail for a time in various parts of the world; but the tendency towards restoration, and correction, is apparent.

TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Haddo House, Nov. 22, 1834.*

It was quite clear that the Government, after the death of Lord Spencer, could not long endure; but no one expected that it would have been dissolved before the meeting of Parliament. Nothing whatever is settled, or will be settled, until the arrival of Peel from Italy. The D. of W. has strongly recommended that Peel should be Prime Minister; and of course not a single office can be filled up at present, until his views are known. I have no doubt that he will accept the situation; although personally he would prefer that the Duke should go to the Treasury. I have received a summons from the Duke to come to London, which I shall do, in consequence of his desire, and not of my own inclination.

I daresay you will not believe this; but I shall never be quite satisfied with you until I am able to make you comprehend what I feel about official life. It would be great affectation to pretend to be quite indifferent to the importance belonging to the situation of Secretary of State; but late events both publick and private, have tended to diminish the satisfaction which it might afford, and to confirm other tastes and pursuits.

Lord Aberdeen was thus prepared to leave, for a time, his native land, and the patrimony of his fathers,

having undergone and suffered more than most men. Naturally reserved, with a heart that many sorrows had pierced, his reserve passed into an austerity of manner which made him difficult to be understood, save by the very few who were intimate with him. Compensations, great and merciful, were to come into his life, and time dims, if it never effaces. He was ready to leave his fir woods and the works of his hand when the call came, and to go forth yet again to labour and be spent in the cause of his country.

He was summoned (as indicated in the foregoing letter) in the middle of November, 1834, by a characteristic letter from the Duke of Wellington, calling him to his assistance in London.

The Duke told him of the King's *coup d'état* and that the Government had "gone out sulkily," but that he had been very cool and quiet, and engaged to keep things very cool and quiet! till Peel's return from Rome.

He wrote to Princess Lieven :

I shall offer no difficulties in the way of any arrangement which might be contemplated; especially if the Duke himself could be persuaded to fill the office.

Should it end, as possibly it may, in my return to office, you already know my profession of faith. I have nothing to add to what you have heard more than once; and I hope you will have no difficulty in believing the deep regret which your absence would occasion. You recollect there was a time of my official life when we were ill together; not personally, that could not be, at least on my part, but politically. You know the causes of this; and it has always been a source of pleasure to me to reflect that they had entirely ceased before I left office; and that we parted as good friends as we should now meet; although you did not at that time know the nature of a Whig Government as well as you do at present.

To Mr. Gurney he wrote :

*Dec. 16, 1834.*

I was the Lord President for eight and forty hours. I do not say that it was in consequence of your advice, but it was in fact the office which I had selected from the whole number as that which under present circumstances I most preferred. In an evil hour however I allowed myself to be persuaded to take the Admiralty. . . .

After all I may think myself fortunate in having escaped the Colonies, which was no easy matter.

He did not escape them, due largely to his own advice. The Duke wanted him to resume his place at the Foreign Office, his own assumption of that post being, he thought, objectionable on account of his deafness. Lord Aberdeen overruled this objection. He wrote to Princess Lieven :

The Duke is at the Foreign Office, having been urged, by me certainly more strongly than by anyone, to go there. His own wish was that I should have resumed the situation ; but I could not be blind to the superior weight of his name and influence. I had intended to decline for myself any other laborious office, and was to have been President of the Council, which would have enabled me to give the greater part of my time to foreign affairs. I was, however, first persuaded to accept the Admiralty ; and since that time I have, though much against my inclination, been appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies.

This office was highly distasteful to him, and it was with sincere relief that he relinquished its uncongenial duties, on the overthrow of Sir Robert Peel’s short administration in the spring of 1835.

His dislike of the post was due chiefly to two causes—the amount of patronage which then belonged to it, the distribution of which was to him odious ;



and the existence in almost every colony of what he recognised as true and well-founded grievances, which were nevertheless so mixed up with faction and unreasonable pretensions as to render their redress a work of the utmost embarrassment and difficulty. Everywhere he found agitation and discontent.

He wrote to Mr. Gurney :

*Colonial Office, Jan. 27, 1835.*

As a lover of your country I am sure it will give you pleasure to learn that Heligoland is quiet and contented. This is something to be able to say, for of what other colony it can be said I know not. Hot water, I presume is the favourite element of mankind, or at least of Colonial mankind, and if they like it I ought not to quarrel with them for it.

In after years Lord Aberdeen used to say that the irksomeness of the Colonial Office was accompanied by one compensation—that which was to be found in the pleasure which he derived from the constant society and companionship of Sir James Stephen, then permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in whose conversation (not on the business of his Office) Lord Aberdeen found a peculiar charm.

His intercourse with his political under-secretary was also destined to become the foundation of a lifelong friendship, for it was in that capacity that he first made acquaintance with Mr. Gladstone. To Mr. Gurney he wrote :

*Jan. 27, 1835.*

In consequence of the defeat of my under-secretary in the County of Forfar I have been obliged to appoint another. I have chosen a young man whom I did not know, and whom I never saw but whose good character and abilities I had often heard of. He is the young Gladstone, and I hope he will

do well. He has no easy part to play in the House of Commons but it is a fine opening for a young man of talent and ambition and places him in the way to the highest distinction. He appears to be so amiable that personally I am sure that I shall like him.

Mr. Gladstone himself thus describes their first interview :

On an evening in the month of January, 1835, I was sent for by Sir Robert Peel, and received from him the offer, which I accepted, of the under-secretaryship for the Colonies. From him I went on to your father, who was thus to be, in official home-talk, my master. Without any apprehension of hurting you, I may confess that I went in fear and trembling. I knew Lord Aberdeen only by public rumour. Distinction of itself, naturally and properly, rather alarms the young. I had heard of his high character; but I had also heard of him as a man of cold manners, and close and even haughty reserve. It was dusk when I entered his room—the one on the first floor, with the bow-window looking to the Park—so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance. I do not recollect the matter of the conversation; but I well remember that, before I had been three minutes with him, all my apprehensions had melted away like snow in the sun; and I came away from that interview, conscious indeed—as who could fail to be conscious?—of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness, and even friendship, that I believe I thought more about the wonder of his being at that time so misunderstood by the outer world, than about the new duties and responsibilities of my new office.

“Misunderstood” he most unquestionably was, and that to a degree which is truly surprising, making every allowance for party misrepresentations and the unfavourable impression produced by his own reserve and seclusion. On the assembling of Parliament in 1835, Lord Howick vehemently assailed the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen as the leaders of the new Government in the House of Lords, and denounced the latter as a man whose principles made him an enemy of the human race! Three years later, in 1838, Lord Howick very handsomely admitted that such terms had been undeserved, and that, on returning to office, he had found (no doubt to his surprise) that, both in what he had written and what he had done, Lord Aberdeen’s short administration of the Colonial Office was marked by thorough liberality. In later years, no one more highly appreciated Lord Aberdeen than Lord Grey (as Lord Howick had then become). In 1838 Lord Howick did not know that, had it not been for this speech, it was to him that Lord Aberdeen had resolved to offer the Government of Canada, and the conduct of the measures to be taken for the conciliation of the Canadian people.

Lord Aberdeen, indeed, still wished to make the offer, even after being called “an enemy of the human race,” but on this Sir Robert Peel placed his veto. Lord Howick, he said, could not now accept the proposal, and might doubt the sincerity with which it had been made, while the offer itself, under the circumstances, would be hardly compatible with the consideration due to the Duke of Wellington, or indeed with self-respect on the part of Lord Aberdeen.

Short, however, as was his tenure of office, and much as he disliked its duties, Lord Aberdeen took some steps of considerable importance. He sent Lord Amherst to Canada with full powers to investigate and settle on the most liberal principles, the grievances of that colony. He believed his written instructions to be among his best compositions, and they were as usual “full of wisdom and justice.”



On the conduct of foreign affairs by Lord Grey’s Government he was critical. Lord Palmerston’s meddlesome and irritating policy was not according to his views. After the fall of Sir Robert Peel’s Government, when again in opposition, Lord Aberdeen continued these criticisms, especially regarding Palmerston’s policy of “intermeddling, and intermeddling in every way and to every extent short of actual force” in the affairs of other countries, under the impression that by so doing he increased the influence of England. Lord Aberdeen thought such interference was sure to make England hated, even by those on whose behalf she intervened, and scorned by those who saw that her blustering language, if firmly met, was followed by no serious action.

Lord Aberdeen was denounced as a sympathiser with despotism, for it was against despotic Powers that this meddling was mostly displayed, but that he was not so this history has abundantly proved:

Though he differed from Lord Palmerston in the conduct of the Foreign Office, he had no antagonism to Lord Melbourne’s Government. Many of its members he knew well, and there were the ties of old and personal friendships, or family connections. As we have seen throughout, public life had few charms for him, and he was in no haste to overthrow the Whig Government. His great difficulty was in being a partisan, or belonging to any party with a fixed name and formula. He knew that there was no essential difference between the Whigs who were in office and the Tories who looked to succeed them.

Lord Aberdeen did not share any exaggerated apprehensions, and was confident that were the Whig Government inclined to adopt dangerous measures, which he did not really believe, the Conservative party was too strong to render any indulgence of such tendencies possible. He wrote to Princess Lieven in 1838 :

I and one of my friends (Peel) are perfectly

satisfied to remain out of office, fully possessed of the means of preventing all legislative mischief, and able to expose any weakness or misconduct of the Government. We can wait without any sacrifice, but our eager friends are not easily to be repressed. They do not understand these cool speculations, and think that nothing is gained so long as a Whig Ministry is in office.

Nor could he attribute overwhelming importance to measures as to the wisdom of which opinions might indeed differ, but which were not revolutionary, and which would make no vital change in the condition of the country. It was consequently difficult to persuade him to remain in London during the latter part of the session. On one occasion the Duke of Wellington, who looked more seriously at the situation, had urged Lord Aberdeen to postpone his departure for Scotland on the ground that there were many important measures coming up from the House of Commons to which the House of Lords must give their attention, and on which they must decide. On Lord Aberdeen demurring to do so, and expressing an opinion that, except in very special cases, the Lords should not interfere with Bills the Commons had passed, the Duke lost patience, and rejoined :

I think that men must now open their eyes, and see that if they don't act together, and make an effort to preserve property and rights from further invasion, they must all and each of them in his turn become a sacrifice to the new principles and course of action. I wish the House of Lords, if possible, to prevent the enactment of fresh mischief in this session of Parliament; or that, if such must be enacted, men's minds should be awakened to the contemplation of it through the discussion of the measures in contemplation. Possibly I am wrong.



All this trouble and these efforts may be useless, nay, more, injurious. It may be best to let the country go to the devil its own way, or according to the guidance of the Government, the Political Unions, the Chartists ! With all my heart ! Be it so ; I will not desire anybody to stay ! I have before stood, and I can now stand, alone ; and, please God, as long as I have strength and voice, they shall hear of the mischief which they have done and are doing.

Towards the end of 1838, Princess Lieven wrote to him. She had lost two sons in the Russian War, and her husband had just died. She was weary of the contemplation of her own sorrows, and she sought relief from them in the stir of political life in which she had been brought up from her earliest years. His answer was characteristic :

With your great talents and acquirements you can never be without resources ; but in one respect I confess that we greatly differ. You look for interest and amusement in the agitation of the world and the spectacle it affords ; now I cannot express to you my distaste for everything of the kind.

This is not from a tendency to become gloomy and morose, for the contrary is the fact ; but I have had enough of the world, and without any extravagance, would willingly have as little to do with it as is decent.

The great possessions and personal popularity of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered him the natural head of the Scottish Conservatives. In 1838 he was compelled by illness to leave England for a considerable time, and Lord Aberdeen was urged by the Duke of Wellington to assume the leadership and management of the Conservative party in Scotland. Lord Aberdeen declined to do so, alleging that neither his habits nor his character was suited to

the duties of such a post, which ought to be filled by a man of more popular address, to whom general society was less distasteful and party politics more interesting. The Duke replied that he had written to Sir Robert Peel to join with him in overcoming Lord Aberdeen's resistance, and added :

I close my answer to your letter of the 5th with this observation, which I beg you to reflect on. You went to the Colonial Office disliking it and its business, and everything connected with it. You see how well you succeeded in it, and that you are now the standard of our Colonial policy, as you were before of our Foreign policy. This was done in a few months. The conclusion which I wish you to draw is this, that you have only to give your attention to any subject or any business, however irksome or disagreeable to you, to do it better than others, and you will master it as easily as you did the affairs of the Colonial Department.

He consented, but with great reluctance, to undertake what the Duke and Peel had advised.

To Mr. Hope he wrote :

*Dec. 30.*

I have consented, at the request of the Duke of Wellington and Peel, to take that general charge of Scotch Conservative matters, which the Duke of Buccleuch performed so well; but it is sorely against my inclination. This will detain me for a few days near Edinburgh, and perhaps there may be some point of my odious Process which may provide matter for discussion during my stay. It is very odd that I take little, or no interest in my own law business; although I have a good stomach for that of every other person; and sit down with as much pleasure to those quarto pages furnished to the Court of Session, as to a new Waverley novel.

In his correspondence with Mr. Hope he frequently urges him to come to Haddo. The inaccessibility of Aberdeenshire, he fears, may deter him. In a letter written in 1836, he sets out how Haddo House can be reached from Edinburgh :

*Haddo House, Oct. 4, 1836.*

I understand from your note, that you are likely to be here on Tuesday; but dinner is entirely out of the question. I am 120 miles from Kinross, which is more than a long day’s journey in Scotland. I have generally come here from Perth, which is a hundred and three miles; and have found it quite enough to do to get here about nine o’clock. I should recommend another division of the road. Forfar is just halfway, and is not a bad Inn. If you push on to Laurencekirk; or Stonehaven you would find a comfortable house. In either of these three cases, you might easily be here the next day before dinner.

If you prefer staying at Perth, which for a noisy and constantly frequented house is not bad (The George) you may come here on the following day without any great exertion; but must give up all thoughts of dinner. Wherever you sleep on the road, it is always worth while to write the day before; and even to order horses. Anyone who was sufficiently independent to come by Barclay’s coach, which is the best in Scotland, would arrive at Aberdeen from Edinburgh about six o’clock, and might be here soon after eight. But this is a terrible jumble. My sons, and other very young gentlemen have travelled in this manner.

The condition of things which he found at Haddo in 1805 has been described. He had decided to live there a part of each year, exiled as he felt himself from the culture and refinement of the South. The



"self-imposed task" had become a pleasure, for his Aberdeenshire home was to him a real delight. Thirty years of labour had not been wasted; his woods, his landscape gardening, the sports he described as "rational"—otter-hunting, and hawking, days on the moor after grouse or "chasing the wild deer and following the roe"—all had helped to heal the deep wounds his affections had endured, and made him love Nature he had felt so unkindly in his happier years.

He was always impatient to get to Haddo from London, and always left it with reluctance and regret. It was his home, and he was never so well content as when there in the midst of "*cette grande existence féodale*," which struck M. Guizot when he visited Haddo some years later.

His elder sons were now growing up to manhood. Lord Haddo had made a successful start at Cambridge, and in his first year at the University gained some distinction, greatly to Lord Aberdeen's delight, who wrote to him that it had brought tears to his eyes, but they were tears of joy. Lord Haddo's majority was made the occasion of a great manifestation, and Lord Aberdeen entertained at dinner nearly a thousand of his tenants. In 1840 Lord Haddo married, and when he brought home his bride, the tenants, who to the number of 700 or 800 had escorted their carriage on horseback from the Lodge, in their turn invited Lord Aberdeen and the newly married pair to a dinner presided over by one of their own body. At this dinner Lord Aberdeen, with Lady Haddo on his arm, walked past the long rows at each table as though inspecting a regiment, and then in a few simple and very touching words presented her to them as the wife of their future landlord, and the successor of those "whom she might equal, but could not surpass."

The first time I ever saw him (writes Lady Aberdeen) was at a garden party given by Lady Mansfield at Caen Wood. Somebody pointed him

out to me, and said, “You might take him for a Methodist parson.” Certainly he was dressed in black, and looked very grave and sad, but somehow his countenance impressed me in a remarkable way, so much so that I have still a perfectly distinct recollection of his appearance on that day.

After that, I do not remember seeing him again till just before my own marriage. Naturally I felt some trepidation at meeting him then, but his gentle kindness and the calm affectionate tone of the little he said to me helped to reassure me, and when I was told that in answer to Mademoiselle d’Este’s praise of my younger sister, he had said, “I like *my own* best, however,” my surprise and gratitude were very great: I think I was never really afraid of him after that.

Then came our arrival at Haddo, and the words he spoke that day. All the time that we were there he seemed to take pains to become acquainted with me and to make me feel that he looked on me as a daughter; though it was only gradually that the relation of father and daughter between us became as true as if I had been his own child.

Lady Haddo, afterwards Countess of Aberdeen, long survived her father-in-law. Those who can remember the stately and beautiful face could well imagine the friendship which grew up between her and Lord Aberdeen. She could not surpass those who had gone before, but she filled a place in his heart all her own, and she did much to relieve the sense of loneliness, and to mitigate the reserve which encompassed the way that he yet had to tread.

Writing to her in 1840, he says:

I cannot tell you the pleasure it gives me that you should express your satisfaction with your first visit to Haddo; neither can I make you fully aware of how

much I feel the loss of your society. But why should I speak of your *visit*? You must necessarily consider it as your own home hereafter, and I hope it is not very unnatural that you should do so even now. I can only, once more, assure you that there, and everywhere else, you may surely rely on never knowing any change or abatement in my endeavours to contribute to your happiness, so far as it can be affected by anything in my power to do.

In 1853, when he saw the war clouds gathering, some news came in "good and tranquilising," but not as good as he ardently desired. Hoping still "all things," he said, "it will doubtless be a source of lasting satisfaction to me, and, sooner or later, the policy which has preserved peace will be duly estimated; but I am not certain if the sympathy of an affectionate heart is not more valuable than any other tribute."

When his fighting days were over, he was thinking of Lady Haddo on the Nile, with her husband, then in an anxious state of health. He asked her how she liked the Viceroy's wife? "I need not ask her how she liked you; for with you, I think all nations and all ranks must be the same. You are one of those happy natures whom 'when the eye sees, then it blesses!' I bless you with my whole heart."



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

“ I have never yet met an Englishman who could understand, or even conceive, that idea of the relation between Church and State which was embedded and embodied in the constitution of Scotland.”—*George, 8th Duke of Argyll, 1835–1840.*

No Biography of Lord Aberdeen would be complete if it did not describe the part which he took in the affairs of the National Church of Scotland during those years which led up to, and ended in the Disruption of 1843.

His position was one of importance, standing as he did between the Government and the action taken by the General Assembly, which in matters ecclesiastical acted as a Supreme Court of the Realm. He was in the confidence of the leaders on both sides in the conflicting issues as to the spiritual independence of the Church, and the rights of the State.

In following his correspondence and action during the “Ten Years’ Conflict,” the historian of that period is forcibly presented with a view of the lamentable mismanagement by English statesmen of the affairs of a Church which was truly national in its institution, and formed part of the corporate life of the people of Scotland.

Lord Aberdeen was a Scot by birth. By inheritance he held wide domains, and he was patron of many parishes in Aberdeenshire. He had been educated and reared in contact with the Church of England; his early counsellor and friend in religion had been Dr. Howley, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Whatever preference Lord Aberdeen may have felt for the stately forms of the Anglican service, he had no doubt as to his duty when he took up the inheritance of his ancestral lands. He had



a keen sense of the social mischief wrought by the differences in faith and worship which subsisted between some of the Scottish nobility and the land-owners and the people who, dwelling on their domains, formed part of the nation in that Church which had from its institution claimed to be the Church of the Scottish people. When he came to live on his own estates, he attended the parish church, and was in due course elected as an elder of the parish of Tarves and was selected by the Presbytery of Ellon to sit in the General Assembly. He appears to have been first returned to that Court in 1811, and to have been re-elected yearly until 1828. Probably the claims of office prevented his later attendance, and unfortunately he was not a member in the period of the "Ten Years' Conflict."

In spite of the great advantages possessed by Lord Aberdeen for acting as arbitrator and conciliator, he allowed himself to be heavily handicapped by the choice of a most unfortunate adviser in the person of Mr. Hope, Dean of Faculty in the Scottish Law Courts. Not for the only time in his life, Lord Aberdeen allowed his own just and sane outlook on a controversy to be overshadowed by ill-advised and intemperate counsels.

Writing of this period of the history of the Disruption, George, the 8th Duke of Argyll, thus describes the position :

It was universally said at the time, and it has been since admitted by his son, that Lord Aberdeen was himself much led by the opinion and advice of the then Dean of Faculty, afterwards Lord Justice Clerk, John Hope. He was an able but by nature a headstrong and overbearing man, who was full to the brim of passionate prejudice against the rights claimed by the Church Assemblies. He had himself been a member of the General Assembly, and was one of the most prominent leaders of the minority.

He was the author of the most extreme pamphlet published during the whole controversy on that side of the question. It was specially addressed to the ignorances and prejudices of the English Tories, and in particular to rousing the alarms of the owners of Church patronage in England. It concealed entirely or slurred over, the statutory declaration of spiritual independence as a Divine right of the Christian Church. It identified all such claims with those of priestly domination, although the element of sacerdotalism was absolutely wanting in a church which rested entirely on the free participation of the laity in every claim it made. It finally called on the Government to enforce the law—that is, to compel the Church Courts to exercise the power of ordination at the bidding of lawyers like himself.

The English statesmen who were engaged in mis-handling the situation appear to have had a perverse desire to take no counsel with any of those who could enlighten the gross darkness of their ignorance as to what was troubling the national life across the Border.

Lord Aberdeen saw clearly enough the extravagant demands on the one side, and he fully realised the lack of recognition and even of comprehension on the part of those who were straining things to the breaking point in Downing Street.

The ignorance of even well-informed people in the southern part of Great Britain as to Scotch affairs was, at the beginning of the century, almost total, and even half a century ago was surprisingly great. Since that time it has probably diminished, but it cannot be denied that it is still considerable.

More than seventy years have passed since the Disruption took place. Not only are Englishmen still dwelling in the ignorance which overshadowed their ancestors at the time of this event, but the present generation of Scottish Presbyterians would

find it hard to recognise the watchwords under which the contending parties fought. It is almost impossible to reconstruct their meaning, and fortunately it is equally impossible to reproduce the atmosphere of bitter and acrimonious hostility which turned a Christian people into the ways of "all uncharitableness." The dust lies thick upon the controversy, the life has passed from the dry bones of Covenants and Declarations of Right, and still are the hearts which were stirred to such vehement and genuine emotion.

The faith once delivered to the saints has not, nor can it change, but the outlook of the Church on her standards and confessions must ever progress. In this respect the controversy within the Church, which produced the Disruption, is not singular. We have only to look for a moment at the contemporary movement in the Church of England—that of the Tractarians. No one now reads these "Tracts for the Times," which in their day were written by pens and read by hearts aflame with the belief that hidden truths were being brought to light and new life was filling the veins of the Church Militant here on earth.

The writer of the "Ten Years' Conflict" attributes much of the unrest in the Church of Scotland to the rising power of democratic government, consequent on the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. In that year Dr. Arnold wrote, "The Church, as it now stands, no human power can save." Such was the outlook of the Anglican churchman, knowing that the powerful vote of the Nonconformists would have to be reckoned with. Dr. Arnold did not sufficiently appreciate the movement within the Church of England, which was taking fresh stock of the heritage handed down from the Apostolic ages.

The biographer of Dr. Pusey mentions that among the things which quickened the interest in mediæval ecclesiastical history was the romantic light thrown on it by the genius of Sir Walter Scott. The "Tracts for the Times" had been "aimed to prevent the extension of Popery," and their author in chief



was to lead a considerable following into the Church of Rome.

Lord Moncrieff, one of the Disruption leaders in the General Assembly, passed the Veto Act "for the tranquillising of the mind of the Church," an Act which in the course of the next ten years was to produce a disruption among her members.

In Scotland, the life of the Church was being renewed by a powerful evangelical movement. John McLeod Campbell, of Row, and Edward Irving had uttered their testimonies, and had both been made martyrs by those who would receive no spiritual counsel on the doctrines of the Fatherhood of God, and the Atonement made for all mankind. Campbell and Irving were driven out, but they had spoken to the conscience of the Church.

More than a hundred years of peace had been enjoyed by the Scottish Church. Since the Revolution she had not had to fight with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other. Persecution, which always produces the fruit of fanatical and sectarian zeal, had ceased to trouble the peace of the people who had chosen the Presbyterian form of Church government.

Green were the graves of the unyielding Covenanters, the Bass Rock no longer held within its bastions the worn and undaunted prisoners of the Scottish faith, kept in the grip of a perverse and foolish dynasty. The killing times were past, and the Church had time to discover in her sectarian quarrels that she was fast losing the spirit and life of her sole Head and Lord.

Spiritual destitution went hand in hand with the famine and poverty which marked the history of Scotland in these years when the Church's controversy with the State was being formulated.

It is not the province of this account of the National Church, and the part played in the history of these times by Lord Aberdeen, to deal with the disturbance within the Anglican Church which culminated in what has been described as the greatest

blow the Church of England has received, in the secession to Rome of Dr. Newman.

Scotland has not yet recovered from the effects of the Disruption, but to many students of history the causes which inevitably brought that disaster on the National Church are more easy to find in the ignorant misgovernment of the British Parliament than are the reasons for the upheaval in the Church of England.

The controversy was fought under two distinct heads—*first* the right of the patronage of the Church, as to whether ministers should be chosen and called by the patrons of the living or by the congregation to whom they were to act as pastors and teachers.

*Secondly*, the interference of any court or civil magistrate in a matter which to those who claimed the right to call and appoint their own spiritual overseers appeared an act which went against the spiritual freedom framed and granted to the Church at the Revolution settlement. The political party who looked exclusively at the established relations between Church and State felt that the patronage of livings was as much part of the settled law of the land as were the endowments meagrely preserved for the use of the National Church when the Presbyterian form of government was acknowledged by the State as the National Church of Scotland. Accustomed as Lord Aberdeen had been in England to the Erastian elements in the organisation of the Church of England, he had presented to him a different aspect of a National Church when he became acquainted with the position of the Church of the people in Scotland. There he found a claim of freedom in spiritual matters undreamt of by Anglicans, and he himself became a member of an ecclesiastical Court which claimed and had been granted in all matters pertaining to religion the powers of a supreme Court of the realm.

From that Court, in matters spiritual there was no appeal, so long as the General Assembly of the



National Church was true to her standards of faith and doctrine.

The scandals of patronage, its pluralities, simony and absenteeism, had always been greater in the Church of England than in the poorer sister Church. It was not the exercise of patronage, but the fact of patrons holding their title by civil law, which constituted the grievance of the Scottish people. It is generally admitted that the patrons, whether they were dissenting Episcopalians or Presbyterians, had on the whole been distinguished by a careful desire to do what was right by the congregations over whom they appointed ministers. More than one of the Disruption leaders looked with anxiety at the prospect of the unfettered choice of congregations.

Lord Aberdeen estimated the differences, whether of doctrine or discipline, which existed between the two sister Churches as of little importance, and when in Scotland he was a regular attendant at the services of the parish church. He had the highest admiration for the work done by the Scottish clergy, many of them were among his intimate friends, and when Dr. Chalmers took the lead in the secession movement, Lord Aberdeen came into intimate relations with him.

Lord Aberdeen used jocularly to style himself "a sort of eldest son of the Church," and the fact that he was the most distinguished Scotsman at that time in public life made him a spokesman of the Scottish Church in the Government. His high character and reputation for sagacity made the leaders of the Scottish Church look to him with respect, and with the hope that he would put their case so as to be understood by the ignorant and unlearned statesmen, who, accustomed to lay secular hands on the ark of their Established Church, were totally unaware that the like treatment of the Church of Scotland would raise feelings of outrage and profanity in the minds of the Scottish people. Little as such a temper appealed to the sense of moderation in Lord Aberdeen, he saw the danger to both Church and State in the

initial stages of the conflict. Early in the coming storm he was requested to take a part in the controversy. His sense of justice had been recognised and valued in the counsels of the State, while his love of freedom and liberty had earned him the title of "Jacobin." Lord Aberdeen's religious belief and practice were deep and devout, and he viewed the situation with an eye that noted with concern that Scotland once again in her turbulent history was about to have a dispute as to the meaning of spiritual freedom. He believed that the controversy might be averted by wise legislation, and, had his chosen counsellor been like-minded, Lord Aberdeen's name would have gone down to history as one who had healed a schism in the Church, which would never have occurred had the British Parliament and the Government understood the merits of the case which they handled with such conspicuous and presumptuous folly.

In any review of this period of history, it must always be kept in mind that of all the Reformed National Churches in Europe the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was the one most free from State control. By the Revolution settlement in 1690, and in the Act of Union with England in 1707, its constitution was guaranteed, and the supremacy of its courts in things spiritual was solemnly declared. The first oath administered to a British Sovereign on ascending the throne is the one which binds him to maintain the Church of Scotland in all her spiritual freedom and rights.

The whole of the crisis between Church and State in the period of the Ten Years' Conflict lay in the question whether the Church courts were trying to extend their jurisdiction over things temporal, namely, the patronage and endowments of the Church. If this encroachment was proved, then the civil courts claimed a right to protect the patrons and to control the endowments.

The controversy first arose under the head of Patronage, but there were other claims and interests

at work, and before very long the comparatively simple war-cry of non-intrusion was complicated by one which brought the controversy into the bewildering and heated maze of doctrinal theology, comprised in the term, "The Crown Rights of Christ."

Patronage had not been abolished in the Revolution settlement. It had been transferred from individuals to the Kirk Sessions, and afterwards to the "heritors," that is to say, to the landowners who paid the tithes and maintained the Church property, and the elders in each parish, who to a certain extent represented the people.

In 1712, the now united Parliament passed the Act of Queen Anne, and laid the foundation of that Disruption which, in earlier times, would have formed another of the causes for rebellion and consequent religious persecution in Scotland.

The Act of Queen Anne took away the right to nominate a minister, and gave it back to individual lay proprietors, chief among whom was the Crown. The Church never ceased to protest against this Act, but her remonstrances were unheeded by the British Parliament. Dr. Chalmers, writing to Sir James Graham in 1840, states the view of the Church :

The Act of Queen Anne was obtained by the infidel and Jacobite Bolingbroke for the very purpose of punishing the Church and people of Scotland for their adherence to the House of Hanover. At the same time the Act did not supersede the "call," which was proceeded upon for many years after the restoration of Patronage, and was subsequently made effete—not by the civil, but by the ecclesiastical power—by a series of decisions on the part of the General Assembly, whose power in the final determination of every settlement was never questioned until now, when it is exerted on the side of the people and, I will add, on the side of an effectual ministration of the Gospel throughout Scotland.



The power of the Church of pronouncing on the special fitness of any presentee is the almost universal demand of Scottish churchmen. They among us who are most opposed to the popular, contend at the same time for the presbyterial vote.

The Church, under the Act of Queen Anne, had always possessed two safeguards against intrusion. The Presbytery had to try any nominee presented to a charge, and had the power to reject anyone they considered unfit. The other one was about as much use as the *congé d'élire* of a Cathedral Chapter. It lay in the requirement of "a call," a direct invitation from the parishioners themselves. Both these had failed in their original purposes, and, like other safeguards, had ceased to be effective. The Presbytery had taken the line of least resistance, and had only examined the personal gifts of the nominee, and did not concern themselves as to his acceptability to the flock over whom he was appointed. The call, by the indifference of the Church itself, had become, in the words of Dr. Chalmers, "an antiquated but still venerable form." The rise of the Evangelical party in the Church meant a reforming zeal, and the zeal of their leaders for Church extension made a thorough overhauling of the relations between pastors and people a necessity.

In knowledge of ecclesiastical affairs the people were as alert as their leaders. It was not necessary to inflame the always smouldering fires of Church polemics with any "Tracts for the Times." Given the shadow of a grievance in the presentation to livings, there were always those who would carry the grievance from court to court of the Church.

The Assembly endeavoured to revivify the dead letter of the law. The Evangelicals, an ever-increasing number in the Church, proposed in the Assembly of 1833, and carried in that of 1834, the Veto Act. This Act forbade the Presbyteries to proceed to the trial of any candidate proposed if a majority of the

heads of families, being communicants in the parish, dissented from the call. The promoters of this Act believed themselves to be within their legal powers and thought that the working of the veto would be effective in giving a fresh impetus to the non-intrusion principle.

By statute, the patron, or patrons, had a right to have their candidate taken on trial, and if he was found duly qualified, it followed that the parish had to accept him. Thus the Veto Act brought at once the State law into conflict with the law just passed by the General Assembly.

When Scots have a difference in opinion, their instinct is at once to fight it out. Debarred from personal or civil warfare, they take their cause to the Judge, and a "ganging plea" is as the breath of the nostrils to that people, both gentle and simple. The Act of Anne and the Veto Act of 1834 were soon in collision. The Veto Act had been rejected by one Assembly by a small majority. It was looked at very differently by the different parties in the Church who ultimately passed it into law. Nearly everyone was agreed that it was inexpedient, if not absolutely immoral, to place a minister in charge of a parish when the people did not desire his ministry. The instant the question was brought before the civil courts, they insisted on raising the controversy as to the definition of civil and ecclesiastical authority. Here the profane hand of the law touched the ark wherein was enshrined the spiritual freedom of a Christian people within their chosen ecclesiastical polity. The two contentions, driven to their extreme conclusions, produced the schism within the National Church. The rights of patrons and presentee, as protected by the State, on the one side, and on the other hand non-intrusion, became the quasi-religious doctrine of "the Crowned Rights of the Redeemer."

Neither Lord Aberdeen nor Dr. Chalmers was a member of that fateful Assembly which passed the Veto Act in 1834. Dr. Buchanan, the historian



of that Act in Church history, says, "Thus was consummated that first great step towards the reinforcement of the constitutional privileges of the Christian people in the calling and settlement of their ministers."

This regulation of the Assembly, known as the Veto Act, was regarded with very different eyes by the various sections of the majority which adopted it. Some regarded it as a mere measure of expediency; by others it was looked on as the fulfilment of a Scriptural obligation. Some considered it merely a declaration and definition of the existing law. Others admitted its novelty, but insisted on the inherent right of the Church to legislate with regard to all that concerned the induction of its ministers. Dr. Chalmers had from the first doubts as to the legality of the measure, which he afterwards on one occasion designated as "a great blunder." Lord Aberdeen, while not free from doubts as to the legality of the Assembly's action, was disposed to think that it might be covered by an unrepealed section of the Scotch Acts of 1690; and that, at all events, some right of objection, cognisable by the Church courts, was inherent in the congregation.

Lord Aberdeen's correspondence on the action of the Assembly does not seem to have been preserved, and it is not till the Church affairs come before Parliament that his letters to Mr. Hope begin to show his growing interest and fears on the approaching crisis.

Government and Parliament cared for none of these things. The doings of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Court of the Scottish Realm seemed to them quite unimportant, so long as nothing troubled the peaceful indifference with which politicians regarded all matters across the border.

In 1835, under "the aggressive system" of Dr. Chalmers, a deputation headed by himself had been sent from the Assembly to Westminster, there to confer with the Government on the necessity of a great Church extension in Scotland, and to secure

endowments for the new churches which Dr. Chalmers's scheme was rapidly summoning into existence. The Church had long urged on the Government the necessity of Church extension, and had once and again pointed out the inadequate provision made for the rapidly growing population.

The Administration formed by Lord Melbourne in 1835, which was to remain six years in office under two sovereigns and for two Parliaments, was not one which either understood or cared for the affairs of the Church in Scotland. In Lord Melbourne's correspondence with Lord Aberdeen, Dr. Chalmers was referred to, if the Prime Minister was in a good mind, as "Your Pope," and when the Church affairs became complicated and made politics uneasy, then His Majesty's chief adviser characterised the ecclesiastical statesman as "that damned fellow." Dr. Chalmers knew what he wanted, and Lord Melbourne early perceived that if he was to make himself master of the claims of the Scottish Church he would have to take more trouble than, in his opinion, it was worth.

When the necessity of introducing some measure to settle the unrest in the Church was put before him, he stated, before the discussion had gone very far, that he foresaw the greatest difficulty in ascertaining distinctly what were the views or claims of the present dominant party in the Church, and that there was no probability that any measure which the legislature might adopt would in any degree satisfy their expectations or exhaust their claims.

It is worth while to quote one paragraph of the Report of that deputation under the hand of Dr. Chalmers. It shows conclusively how little he contemplated a Disruption in the Church of the Nation, and how, during the succeeding ten years, the Government changed the loyalty to the one ideal into hostility to the very principle the State had bound itself to observe and abide by in the Revolution settlement.

In the "Circular on Church Accommodation,"

Chalmers ends his report in words as remarkable as any that fell from him :

This is an age of hostility to endowments by the State; and our great dependence, under heaven, for the fuller equipment of our Church is on the endowments of Christian charity. The spoliators of our Establishment are on the wing, and their unhallowed hands are already lifted up to mutilate and to destroy. But if supported as we ought, the benefactors of our Establishment will greatly outnumber and overmatch them. In that mighty host of aliens from the lessons and ordinances of the Gospel, who are still unreached and unreclaimed, we behold full demonstration of the impotency of what is commonly termed the Voluntary system. It is now for the Church to bestir herself, and put forth her own peculiar energies and resources, in the work of calling in these hapless outcasts; and in proportion to our success shall we earn for the cause of religious Establishments the friendship of the wise and good, the support of every honest and enlightened patriot.

The deputation was met by the Government with the inevitable Royal Commission of Inquiry, and Dr. Chalmers argued the case of the Church before it. The Commission reported after two years, and the Report completely endorsed all that had been set forth by the like Commission of the General Assembly. The Report fell still-born, and the Government took no action and probably never concerned themselves with the findings of their own Commissioners.

The Deputation, while in London, had a conference with the Duke of Wellington. They were addressed by the Duke with refreshing candour :

Gentlemen, you will get nothing. That is my opinion. I am sorry for it; but you will find it.



You have two parties against you—the Radicals, with Lord Brougham at their head; and the Government, who are really as much opposed to you as the Radicals. I believe they will not be able,—or, at least, it will be with great difficulty if they succeed,—to carry through the grant of the Bishops' teinds.

They are part of the consolidated fund; they will need an Act to get them out; and I doubt if they will obtain it from the Commons. The other part of their measure, altering the law as to the unexhausted teinds, and which affects the rights of property, I think they will get through the Lower House. There is some robbery to be committed by that part of the plan [he said, with a sarcastic smile], and that is a great recommendation to any measure in present times. But my firm conviction is [he again repeated] that you will get nothing. The real question which now divides the country, and which truly divides the House of Commons, is just this,—Church, or no Church. People talk of the war in Spain and the Canada question; but all that is of little moment. The real question is, Church, or no Church; and the majority of the House of Commons, a small majority, it is true, but still a majority, are practically against it. It is a melancholy state of things, but such appears to me to be the actual position in which we now stand.

It is not difficult to picture the scene and the two chief actors. The Duke speaking with military brevity, and with his eye on the material facts of Lord Melbourne's Government, and the position of parties. The great Church leader yearning after the spiritual independence of the National Church, desirous of seeing its work extended with the enlargement of the divine Kingdom, and claiming the willing allegiance of a people whose only Lord is the Supreme Head of the Church.

Neither the Duke nor Lord Melbourne was capable of grasping the vision of Dr. Chalmers. When he delivered in London his famous lectures defending Church Establishments, they were thronged by statesmen of every political party, and listened to with a pharisaical calm. If the deaf ear of the adder could have been unstopped, the prophet's warning would not have been allowed to pass as a watch in the night.

Lord Aberdeen liked neither the Commissioners nor the Royal Commission, and thought they were against the true interests of the Church. He wrote his mind freely to Mr. Hope :

*Aug. 13, 1835.*

These Commissions have of late been sufficiently arbitrary, but under the operation of this I do not see how it is possible for the Church to escape degradation, and even destruction. I believe the majority of the people however, are still sound in Church matters, and, by some means or other, I trust this feeling will become apparent, and be made known to the government. Have you any suggestions to make?

The allusion to the grant, asked for by the Church, was one of the suggestions put forward in the Report of the General Assembly. In a later communication, Lord Aberdeen believes that the Commissioners will be cautious, for Melbourne is certainly for a quiet life.

TO MR. HOPE

*Oct. 3/35.*

The Memorialists do not presume to point out the sources from which Government might, if so inclined, provide the supply required; but they may venture to mention one Fund, the application of which to the purposes in question would seem peculiarly appropriate. This Fund consists of



the Tithes and Rents belonging to or administered by the Bishops in Scotland prior to the Revolution. On the abolition of Episcopacy these Tithes and Rents were assumed, and till a very recent period were administered by the Crown.

This property has been already in part appropriated to religious objects in the endowment of churches and Professorships of Theology, by a series of royal warrants of various dates. . . .

The Memorialists are aware that this fund was at the commencement of the reign of His present Majesty transferred to the general purposes of the State; but when it is considered how small a portion of the revenue derived from Scotland is expended on its internal government, they respectfully submit that it seems peculiarly suitable that a part of the national resources should be employed in supplying the means of religious instruction among the lower classes of the people.

It is evident that whatever the Commissioners recommended, if Lord Melbourne was to have the quiet life for his Government that he desired, it was his part to say to the Commissioners in practice that he would read their Report "at a more convenient season." The brunt of the battle was not to fall on him or his Government. Sir Robert Peel, with Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Grahame, were to find in the next government that the Church of Scotland has never given up the fight when the Church in the nation has to be upheld.

To follow the movement of the Ten Years' Conflict is not possible, except in as far as Lord Aberdeen was concerned. He was soon brought into local contact with the effects of the Veto Act, and the pains he took to satisfy himself with the claims of all the parties concerned in his own parish and estate made him take a wider survey of the coming struggle between the Church asserting her spiritual independ-

ence, and the State endeavouring to circumscribe the bounds of her claim of inherent Rights to Self-Government in spiritual matters.

It will be recollected that the object of the Veto Act, passed in the General Assembly of 1834, was to forbid Presbyteries to proceed to trial of the candidate proposed, if a majority of the heads of families, being communicants, should intimate their dissent from the call of such a minister.

The Assembly believed itself to be well within its powers in this legislation, and regarded it as merely giving fresh force to the principle of Non-Intrusion which had always been recognised in theory by the State.

The Veto Act deprived the patron of a statutory right to have his candidate taken on trial, "and if duly qualified by the Presbytery" to be accepted. Here the State law came into direct conflict with the law of the Church. Scots are never slow, be they laymen or ecclesiastics, to test their right in the courts of law, and a very few months after the passing of the Veto Act there came the test case, known as the Auchterarder Case.

The biographer of Dr. Chalmers says that the Parliamentary leaders of the Conservative party were, without exception, zealous supporters of the extension of the Church of Scotland. The Church was mentioned in the King's Speech during Sir Robert Peel's short Government in 1835. At a banquet given to him in Glasgow after his election as Lord Rector of the University the Conservative leader spoke in these terms :

When I have joined in the public worship of your Church, think you that I have adverted to distinctions in point of form? Think you that I have troubled myself with questions of Church discipline or of Church government? No, but with a wish as hearty and cordial as you can entertain have I deprecated the arrival of that day, if ever it should come, when

men in authority or in legislation should be ashamed or unwilling to support the National Church of Scotland—to extend its ministration—to advance its banners into the desolate and unclaimed wastes of religious indifference or profligacy.

Brave, if somewhat vague words. More politic than those used by Lord Melbourne when he was reminded by “the d——d fellow” of the encouragement he had held out as to some scheme of endowment with which to meet the great advance of Church extension, raised by voluntary contribution: “With respect to the general and very guarded expressions which were used by myself respecting the proposed grant to the Scottish Church in the year 1834, I can only say that they were employed in utter ignorance of the real state of things.” Lord Melbourne said he had felt “the ground tremble under him.” Small wonder that the leaders distrusted Lord Melbourne. Deserted by the Whigs, the Church turned now to the Conservatives, upon whom, indeed, from the beginning her chief hopes had been built.

In the month of August 1834 the minister of Auchterarder, a small rural Perthshire parish, died. The name has become famous in the history of the Church of Scotland as the spot where the contest which ended in the Disruption had its birth. The Earl of Kinnoull appointed the Rev. Robert Young to the vacant living. Only two persons signed the “call,” and the great majority of the communicants signed a protest against the appointment. There was no objection to either his character or his conduct, but the two persons who signed the call were not members of the congregation, and the signature of the patron’s factor did not commend the call to a people who had just been fortified by the passing of the Veto Act in the General Assembly.

Out of three hundred and thirty persons entitled to dissent from the call, two hundred and eighty-seven came forward to record their names at the



presbytery table, declaring by their dissent that they were actuated by no factious or malicious motive, but solely by a conscientious regard to the spiritual interests of themselves and the congregation.

When Scots declare themselves free of faction, and fractiously claim the freedom of conscience, people of stronger metal than Lord Melbourne have felt the earth tremble under their feet. The Presbytery, in obedience to the Veto Act, refused to "take trial of Mr. Young's qualifications." Patron and presentee raised an action in the Court of Session. The litigation was acrimonious and long drawn out. Through it all the violent and malevolent presence and words of the Dean of Faculty did everything to falsify the true claims of the Church, and to raise up false witnesses from the history of the Scottish Reformation. Nothing was left unsaid that could embitter the relations of the Church and State, as viewed by the Scottish courts. The case was taken to the Laodicean atmosphere of the House of Lords. It confirmed the decision of the Court of Session in favour of Mr. Young and the patron, and the Veto Act was declared illegal.

The Auchterarder case was settled by the Courts of Session in 1838. The law's delays brought the final decision of the House of Lords to 1839. Much had happened in the Church Courts during that long period of suspended judgment, and the Church had little doubt as to the course it should take.

The meeting of the General Assembly in May 1839 was materially affected by the decision of the House of Lords. Dr. Chalmers moved and carried a resolution, which contained three heads. The last proposed the appointment of a committee to confer with the Government to prevent any further collision between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. There was much to recommend the Veto Law as the basis of negotiations. It had worked well during the five years it had been the law of the Church. When it passed the General Assembly it had received Government encouragement from Lord Jeffrey, then



Lord Advocate. The declaration of the House of Lords that the Act was illegal placed the Church in a difficult position, and not unnaturally the leaders looked to the Government for a way out.

Lord Melbourne advised the Committee to send a deputation to London to confer with the Government. The Church desired that Dr. Chalmers should head the deputation. Dr. Chalmers was very dubious of any good results. "It is right," he said, "however, that the Committee should know that on the occasion of the last deputation to Government from the Church, Lord Melbourne expressed a hope or wish that 'that d—d fellow Chalmers' was not amongst them. I have not the vanity to think that his Lordship cared whether the person was present or absent. It was the embarrassing proposition with which he was charged, and which he was prepared to urge in every possible, if right way, that probably annoyed him." Dr. Chalmers ended, "I am very strongly of opinion, as this is in no shape a political question, we should with the full knowledge of the one party hold explicit and full communication with the other party in the State—all should be above board with both."

Dr. Chalmers's decision to go to London was characteristically expressed. "I will take the first lawful opportunity by steam of making my way to the metropolis." By sea he went, and had interviews with most of the leading men:

*July 8, 1839.*

I called on Lord Aberdeen. A long conversation with him, friendly and intellectual, but not thoroughly satisfied, and refused to pledge himself. I was a little damped. He rose in my estimation, though I can see how strong the barrier is in the way of a thorough understanding.

The deputation duly appeared before Lord Melbourne. Chalmers's account of the interview burns to-day with the contempt felt by a great

visionary for the typical English statesman to whom he had to speak. Chalmers writes :

Dr. Gordon opened the matter very well; and I and the Procurator struck in;—but such a feckless fusionless entertainment of the matter on the part of his Lordship I never witnessed in my life. I could not but laugh, when we came out, and looked at the blank faces of all and sundry. The Conservatives are all on the *qui vive* about the matter, but I can perceive that they are sadly blind and prejudiced.

Writing to the Dean of Faculty, Lord Aberdeen had shown he was not blinded to some of the consequences likely to occur :

*March 17, 1838.* Lord Melbourne's declaration of the intentions of the Government relative to the Scottish Church was most astounding. I could never have expected a decision, in some respects so absurd, and in others so unjust. But the great question now is, how we can best deal with the affair so as to give us a chance of bringing it to a successful conclusion. . . . We think it best that every effort should be made to induce the Government to listen to the friendly remonstrances of the Church before we finally resolve to make it the subject of political hostility and contention. It is too probable that we may be compelled to do this at last; but the open separation of the Church of Scotland from the Government will be an evil never to be sufficiently deprecated.

*13th June, 1838.* The state of affairs as connected with the Scotch Church has become rather complicated since the proceedings of the Assembly have been known in England. It is true the question of Church extension has no necessary connection with

the Auchterarder case; but it is impossible to deny that even the legitimate pretensions of the Church are new and striking to English ears. To claim endowments at the same moment in which they assert their independence of civil jurisdiction, I fear will not conciliate the support of many of those who were disposed to be friendly to their cause. We shall delay for a little time in order to consider what might be the best course to take. If no motion shall be made in the House of Commons, with the view of supporting the just claim of the Church to endowments in the great towns, we appear to abandon our duty in the eyes of the people of Scotland; we give a practical triumph to the Government and to the enemies of the Church; and we, to a certain extent, injure the prospects of future success in prosecuting this question. On the other hand, if the motion be made, it will be quite impossible to keep out of the discussion all those matters which have been debated in the Assembly. The members of the Government and others will take care to bring them forward for the purpose of embarrassment. What are we to say? Silence is condemnation; and yet it is difficult to speak. The matter is still *sub judice*, but this will not prevent debate. The practicable view, however, of the question is this. Suppose Sir Robert Peel should bring forward the subject, as was intended, and, in consequence of the matters disclosed to English members during the debate, and affecting the minds of our own friends, he is beaten by a majority of eighty or a hundred, having last year been beaten on this question only by a majority of forty, and having now on all other questions only a majority of twenty against him, how will this result affect us as a party, and how will it affect the prospects of the Church? Under



such circumstances, could Sir Robert Peel venture to repeat, if in office, the recommendation made in the King's speech in the year 1835? This is really a most difficult matter. My impression is, that the wisest course would be to see what the Government propose to do, and that we should not originate any proceedings ourselves after presenting the petitions of the Assembly. It will always be easy to attack their proposition without exposing ourselves in the same degree. If they bring forward no plan at all, I fear we must leave them to their own friends; for they desire undoubtedly that we should take the initiative: and I cannot imagine how it is possible without leading to the most injurious results. The Government are perfectly aware of the present situation of the Church, and cannot conceal the pleasure with which they regard it.

It seems to me that in this, as in all things, time is the great remedy from which we can hope for assistance. Should the matter be kept quiet in Parliament for the present, and the Assembly should submit to the decision of the House of Lords on appeal, all may still be well. Should the House of Lords reverse the decision of the Court of Session, the Assembly will then have right on their side. In either case, we should be able to deal with the question of Church extension more successfully than at present. If indeed the Assembly should resist the decision of the House of Lords, they must bid adieu to additional endowments; and, in fact, they would go far to sever their connection with the State. But I will not anticipate fresh difficulties. They are quite sufficient already.

The Dean of Faculty paid one of his ill-omened visits to Haddo during the autumn of 1838. Lord Aberdeen's correspondence is more of his home than of Church



extension and Veto Acts. He writes of the extension of his improvements, and of otter-hunting in the Ythan, killing after a run of three hours. Landseer, staying with him, was commissioned to make a picture of the sport. In December he agrees with the Dean :

This is not weather to shiver on stone seats. I have been making a great improvement of another kind, by opening a very good view of the Lake from the drawing-room window, a thing I had always thought impossible.

*Haddo House, Dec. 29, 1838.* These Church questions are most lamentable. The effect produced in England is in the highest degree injurious to the Church; and I greatly fear that we have no chance of doing anything in Parliament for them this year. Indeed, I am satisfied that in prudence we ought not to attempt it. But they are well advised, and will probably insist on bringing forward their claims. Failure, I think, is certain, and it is the consequence that I least dread. My apprehension is that the cause and interests of the Church will be permanently injured.

In the year 1839, while the Auchterarder case was still pending in the House of Lords, Lord Aberdeen writes to Mr. Hope. He repeats in many letters his desire to keep the question outside of party politics :

I have never wished to consider this as a party question. If the Government will help the Church, they shall have my thanks, and their motives shall be unquestioned by me. But if they will not, I should wish to act in such a manner as may be most likely to secure the great object in view, without reference to any other considerations.

In March he presented a petition to the House of Lords from both parties in the Auchterarder case praying to be heard at an early date.

*Argyll House, 28th Feb., 1839.* The Church question stands pretty much as it did. We have agreed not to agitate the matter voluntarily in Parliament until the decision of the House of Lords shall have been obtained in the Auchterarder Appeal. Circumstances may possibly compel us to alter this resolution, but I think it very improbable that such should be the case; because I think that by so doing the interests of the Church would greatly suffer. How far this course may affect the political interests of the Conservative Party in Scotland, I really do not know; and, to say the truth, I do not greatly care.

The Church must see that, with an unwilling Government, the pendency of the Auchterarder case affords the means of defeating their claim. I say nothing of the alienation of English friends or the impossibility of making the real question at present intelligible to them. We must act according to our knowledge of the state of the facts; and the Church will sooner or later give us credit for acting conscientiously. If the decision of the Court of Session (upon which I have never given any opinion) shall be reversed by the House of Lords, the question will assume an entirely new aspect; if it shall be affirmed, we may hope by prudence and moderation to give effect to the irresistible claim for endowments. But this will greatly depend on the course pursued by the Church Courts in Scotland.

Lord Aberdeen notes in his correspondence how good it would be if the judgment of the House of Lords could be given before the meeting of the Assembly, and that "the scandal" of the present

state of matters might be removed. In March he says he hopes the judgment will be given early in May. His own opinion is not made up, and "when it is it will be worth nothing. But the consequences to the Church and to the peace of the country of any decision are portentous."

In May Lord Aberdeen's political outlook was unexpectedly interrupted by the incidents attending the resignation of Lord Melbourne and the attempts of Sir Robert Peel to form a Government.

When the House of Lords at last pronounced its judgment Lord Aberdeen wrote to Mr. Hope :

If Chalmers has the courage to take the lead, and to maintain without hesitation his own views and opinions, I trust that moderate counsels may still prevail. The judgment of the House of Lords is pronounced in the manner most favourable for the Assembly to deal with in this sense. But if Chalmers and his friends should falter, and not act with decision and firmness, I fear greatly for the result.

I certainly had some misgivings about the Auchterarder case; but I am now satisfied that the law has been correctly laid down and applied. Whether the existing law can continue without alteration is another question.

*May 25, 1839. Argyll House.* Your account of Election prospects in Scotland is cheering, and I trust, when the moment shall arise for putting its accuracy to the test, will prove to be well founded. But I do not understand the speculations of an early dissolution of Parliament. It is not easy to see how such a measure is to assist the Government. I should think an early prorogation was more probable. I have regularly received and have read the discussions in the General Assembly. I do not very well understand what is the precise footing upon which the



Auchterarder case is now placed; nor how it is intended that other Presbyteries should act in similar circumstances. Neither do I understand the precise object which Chalmers has in view. He seems to have made an admirable speech, and I suppose he has some specified plan by which he hopes to reconcile differences, but I do not collect what it is, either from his speech or his motion. At present matters seem to be in an unpromising state, and I do not see how it is possible to arrive at a favourable issue. I rather think the people will be found to sympathise with the Church. You ought to be much better able to judge of this man than I can be; but I rather think you are inclined to undervalue the extent of this sympathy. At all events, a collision exists, which must be attended with evil consequences. I fear that any Parliamentary interference is not very likely to mend the matter.

Throughout the correspondence Lord Aberdeen shows a strong grasp on the principle for which the Church was struggling—that it should be supreme in all things spiritual. This view Mr. Hope never for an instant understood, and he therefore had none of the prescient misgivings which troubled Lord Aberdeen, as he read the judgments of the House of Lords and considered the speeches of the Church leaders in Edinburgh.

On the legal aspect “lawyers differed.” The view taken by the Church of the Disruption was supported by such men as Glenlee, Fullerton and Jeffrey, who had no connection with the Free Church or its leaders, except active dissent from their religious tenets. Lord Moncrieff, one of the most eminent lawyers of the period, was so convinced of the justice of the Church’s claims, that he ultimately became a Disruption leader. Mr. Hope at the time, in commenting on the case, could only assist Lord Aberdeen by stating, “This is trite law, settled doctrine.”



Mr. Gladstone, no terse exponent of any doctrinal theory, writes to Sir James Grahame :

*Dec. 1839.*

There are few questions more threatening, and none, as I think, more difficult; because, in my belief, the present complication is caused not merely by the excitements of the day, nor, as the Dean of Faculty says, by the ambition of the Scottish ministers, but by principles really embodied in the Presbyterian polity, though disclosed and valued in very various degrees at different periods.

The Dean of Faculty is fearfully long, and concludes and recommences, which is provoking, ten or twelve times. I am now upon Dunlop's answer to him, which, professing brevity, approaches two hundred pages—a laborious, but able document, certainly showing that, if the postulates of Presbyterianism be granted, the right is not all on our side.

Brevity and slowness to speak were never conspicuous during the Ten Years' Conflict.

Amid the acrid and acrimonious arguments of the time, it is refreshing to turn to the personal element, and to study Lord Aberdeen's treatment of the vexed question as it met him at his own door.

While matters were in this state, the practical working of the veto was unexpectedly brought home to Lord Aberdeen in a forcible shape. The Rev. Ludovick Grant, who had been minister of the parish of Methlic for more than fifty years, died in the spring of 1839, and it became Lord Aberdeen's duty, as patron, to nominate his successor. After long and careful inquiry into the qualifications of different candidates, his choice fell on Mr. James Whyte, a gentleman of whose ability, activity, and successful work he had received most satisfactory evidence. Indeed, his possession of these qualifications was not questioned; but a report was circulated in the parish

that Mr. Whyte had, at an earlier period of his career, been guilty of immoral conduct. This report induced a large number of the parishioners to protest against the appointment. Lord Aberdeen, to quote his own words, "wrote immediately to the Presbytery, and desired the strictest inquiry to be made—and in the most public manner—with the view of satisfying the parish." It took place accordingly in the Church of Methlic, and lasted fifteen or sixteen hours. The result was that the accusation was completely disproved, not only to the entire satisfaction of the Presbytery, but to that of the agent of the accusing parties, who declared his constituents, as well as himself, to be perfectly convinced of the utter groundlessness of the charge.

Lord Aberdeen very naturally thought the affair was at an end; but Scotch farmers are hard to convince and slow to abandon any impression they have once formed; and, notwithstanding the trial by the Presbytery, the people still imagined there might be some truth in the accusation, and on that ground continued to object. What followed will be best described in Lord Aberdeen's own words, as contained in letters to the Dean of Faculty :

*Sept. 5.*—I had a meeting the other day with about a hundred of the heads of families. They were very civil and very respectful, but very obstinate. They declared over and over again that they had no other objection to the presentee than the existence of this *fama*, but that such being the case, and the accusation not disproved to their satisfaction, he could never be a useful minister to them. They had no wish to interfere with my patronage, and would be ready to receive anyone I should name, but for the reason stated they could never derive any good from this man, and must therefore object to him. In the belief that they were sincere, I endeavoured to argue the matter with them for

about an hour, but without much success. I shall meet them again the day after to-morrow for the same purpose, although I confess, without much prospect of a better result. I am afraid they have got into bad hands. Their former law-agent would have nothing more to do with the business, but I fear that a radical attorney in Aberdeen has taken it up for them. I am convinced, from their professions towards me, that they are animated by no bad motive, but that it is sheer stupidity which makes them persevere, and an immense majority of the parish are under this delusion. It is altogether a strange business, and it is rather comical that it should have happened to me—a kind of ‘eldest son of the Church.’ *Sept. 9.*—I had my meeting in the Parish Church on Saturday, and did my utmost to convince the people of their error, and of my own sentiments and opinions. I cannot yet say decisively what effect has been produced, but it has certainly been considerable. Many have already avowed a change, and I am inclined to hope the greater number will retract. At the same time it is uphill work; for out of about two hundred and forty heads of families in communion with the Church, upwards of two hundred had signed a paper declaratory of their intention to oppose my presentee. The ground of opposition is confined exclusively to the *fama*, and they have all along been perfectly civil and respectful to me. It is this confidence in their personal feeling towards me that has induced me to venture on such a step as calling them together in the Church and haranguing them on this occasion. I have told them, from an examination of the evidence, of my firm conviction of the innocence of Mr. Whyte, and have given this opinion as if I had spoken from the jury-box. I believe this will have great weight with



many; for they will trust my sincerity and will think that I am better able to judge than they are themselves. They are unfortunately under the influence of two or three bad advisers, but I rather think that I shall prove too strong for them. We shall very soon know the result, for we are to have the 'call' the day after to-morrow. I am very much inclined to attend myself on the occasion; but, after the terms on which I have always lived with these people, it would require great philosophy to see them oppose me before my face. You shall hear when the affair is concluded. Meanwhile all this does not tend to recommend the veto to my affection. *Sept. 12.*—The veto affair has ended prosperously. I attended the Church to-day, and after a very good, but very long sermon from Mr. Robertson of Ellon, I signed the call myself, and was followed in doing so by a considerable number. No symptom of dissent appeared; but those who had been most hostile to Mr. Whyte either did not come to the Church or left it without signing. My allocution on Saturday produced a great effect, and I fairly confess that I never addressed the House of Lords with a tenth part of the interest which I felt on that occasion. Had I failed, considering the footing on which I have always stood with these people, I really should not have known what to do, or what to have felt. The result is the more satisfactory, as I neither threatened nor entreated, but adopted a grave, although a friendly, tone of exposition. I have not seen the letter, but I understand the people of the parish have written to their radical agent in Aberdeen, and have given as the reason for retracting their mandate the feelings which they profess to entertain towards myself. *Sept. 17.*—The issue of Mr. Whyte's affair has been highly satisfactory,



for I really believe from all I hear, that even a better feeling exists between the people and myself than ever prevailed before. Certainly it required a strong stimulus for me to volunteer an oration in a church ! Undoubtedly I felt very strongly the injustice and cruelty of their proceedings against Mr. Whyte. I told them fairly that if I had been aware of the existence of the *fama*, I would not have appointed him, whether innocent or guilty ; but that, having named him, and an investigation having taken place which had perfectly satisfied me of his innocence, no power on earth should induce me to abandon him. All this I felt, and all this was true ; but I fear that my self-love was also deeply wounded at the notion that their conduct exhibited a deficiency of deference towards myself. It tended to prove to me that I did not possess that measure of their respect which I had flattered myself was the case. If the truth must be told, I very much fear that I was secretly even more interested for myself than for Mr. Whyte.

It is satisfactory to be able to add that Mr. Whyte speedily gained the affection and respect of his parishioners, with whom he lived in unbroken harmony for over forty years, full of good works, and died universally regretted and beloved in 1881.

The burning question of the day had thus become practical politics at his own door, within the walls of his own parish, and among his own people. Lord Aberdeen handled the situation with consummate skill, and with an insight which he could never have obtained had not the ties which bound him to his native place been of the warmest affection and respect. The Church to which he had presented a minister whom he believed worthy of his high calling, was one where he himself had worshipped according to the usages of his ancestors. His feelings as a

patron, aware of his great responsibilities, and his feelings as a lover of justice were shocked by the attitude of the congregation towards the minister. The charges made against the presentee were of a grave nature. The most careful investigation had proved them to be unfounded, and it caused the patron indignation and surprise that a congregation should use the Veto Act to perpetrate what would have been a great injustice. Almost immediately after Mr. Whyte's induction, Dr. Chalmers paid a visit to Haddo House. Writing of the visit to Mr. Hope, Lord Aberdeen says, "notwithstanding you appear to me to entertain somewhat hostile feelings against these reverend gentlemen, I expect a visit from Chalmers himself, or our Pope, as Melbourne calls him."

The Dean of Faculty anxiously enquired concerning this visit, and Lord Aberdeen replied :

*Sept. 17, 1839.* You wish to know the result of Chalmers's visit here, and I can only tell you that it had no result at all. We had a good deal of talk respecting Church matters, and especially the Veto. He appeared to admit that some change was required, or at least that it might be safely agreed to; but he did not specify the points which he would concede. As far as I could understand him, I think he seemed disposed to give to the Presbytery all that he took from the people. He agreed that there should be some means of applying a remedy to cases of manifest injustice, and admitted that the instance of Mr. Whyte, which I detailed to him, was one which it was desirable to have some means of correction. He confined himself on the whole to vague generalities, and was therefore unsatisfactory. He was decidedly of opinion that a legislative measure was indispensable; but not at all prepared with its provisions. I spoke to him pretty much in the same strain, though less favourably

of the veto than formerly, and abstained from giving any opinion until I should see the heads of the Bill which it may be proposed to introduce into Parliament for the purpose of settling these affairs.

Mr. Hope's comment on this stage, where negotiation might have brought about a better understanding, was that while "the mad fit" lasted it was better to do nothing.

## CHAPTER IX

### NON-INTRUSION (1840-1843)

#### *Nemo me impune lacessit*

“It is one of my profoundest convictions that a Church on the one hand endowed by the State, and on the other owned and cherished by the people, is the vinculum that would bind together, in golden and indissoluble alliance, a righteous government with a loyal population.”—DR. CHALMERS to LORD ABERDEEN, 1840.

THE Church leaders showed no signs of coming out of their “mad fit.” They knew their own minds and were determined and thoroughly well organised. Writing on January 2, 1840, to Mr. Hope, Lord Aberdeen says :

I entirely agree with you in thinking that we, the Conservatives, ought not to attempt to originate any measure in Parliament with the hope of effecting a settlement of the Church difficulties.

If the Assembly at its meeting should prove reasonable, something may perhaps be done to assist them. If they persevere secession is inevitable.

On his way to London Lord Aberdeen conferred with Dr. Chalmers and the Non-Intrusion Committee at Edinburgh.

The draft of a Bill was produced and read which was said to have been taken to London by the Lord Advocate (Mr. Munro) with the view of being presented by him to the House of Commons. The object of the Bill was to obtain legislative sanction for the Veto Act. As it had been prepared without communication with Her Majesty's Government, and the Lord Advocate had not committed himself to introducing such a measure, Lord Aberdeen thought it useless to consider the matter further.



I took an early opportunity of declaring my assent to the principle of non-intrusion, and I ventured to suggest a mode by which it might be carried into full effect, and which, it appeared to me, that the Legislature might sanction. This suggestion was in substance as follows: that the Presbytery shall be bound to take a qualified presentee on trial; and in the course of the proceedings previous to ordination the objections of the parishioners, if any, shall be received, and duly weighed by the Presbytery; such objections in every case to be accompanied with reasons assigned; but the Presbytery to be at liberty to consider the whole circumstances of the case before them, and to form their judgment without reference to the actual number of persons dissenting or their proportion to the whole amount of communicants and heads of families in the parish—the decision of the Presbytery with respect to the fitness of any individual for the charge to which he is presented to be founded on such full and mature consideration, and to be pronounced on their own responsibility, and according to the dictates of their hearts and consciences; in a word, and to adopt the expression of Dr. Chalmers, it was proposed to recognise a presbyterial veto instead of the popular veto, which it had been attempted to establish by the Act of the General Assembly. . . .

I left the meeting highly gratified by the conciliatory spirit which had been evinced by the Committee, and strongly impressed with the conviction that they had given the most favourable reception to the suggestions which had been offered for their consideration.

Lord Aberdeen was under the impression that his suggestions were acquiesced in by the members of Parliament present, and that the proposition had been favourably received by the Committee.

Thereafter Lord Aberdeen occupied himself in correspondence with Dr. Chalmers and in giving shape to his proposed measure. Before meeting the Non-Intrusion Committee, Dr. Chalmers, as convener, had thanked Lord Aberdeen for a letter full of kindness and encouragement :

It is certainly to be regretted that on the side of the ecclesiastics in this controversy, there should not be all the mildness and moderation which so become our profession. But, on the other hand, I think that the public conduct of our Church in suspending the operation of its own law till the next General Assembly will bear a most honourable comparison with the conduct of those restless and meddling and aggressive instigators, who, in the shape of various legal actions, are doing all they can to obstruct our attempts after a settlement, and to thicken to the uttermost the embarrassments and the difficulties of this transition period.

Dr. Chalmers stated plainly that the Church looked for a protective Act from the Legislature—"not for the confirmation of our Veto laws, but to deliver us from the fangs of the Court of Session."

He further sketched a model of a Bill for the guidance of Lord Aberdeen :

Whereas, in the exercise of the powers of the Church of Scotland, there has occurred for the first time since the present establishment of Presbytery in Scotland a collision between the laws of the Church and the civil law in the settlement of ministers. It is hereby enacted and declared, that it shall be competent for the Church in all time coming and without the forfeiture of any of the rights and endowments which belong to her as a national establishment to legislate on the qualifications of her ministers and on the conditions which the Church holds to be indispensable for their

ordination and admission to the pastoral charge; and, further to pronounce judicially, through her Presbyteries and General Assembly, on the special fitness of every presentee of any charge to which he may have been nominated by a Patron.

While the lawyers were doing their best to darken counsel, it may be certain that the pulpits resounded with the controversy of the day. Dr. Candlish preached to crowded congregations, with an eloquence as fiery as it was determined. Mr. Hope hastened to act as reporter and to put the worst construction on everything that was said by one whose feet in ecclesiastical warfare were seldom shod with the Gospel of peace :

He announced that the Church meant to yield nothing; to maintain and fight for the rights of the Christian people being disputed, or the powers of the Church defined or explained by legislative enactment. The sermon was in a style of extravagance, which has confirmed in many the suspicion of a strong touch of craze in his mind at present.

Thus, through these fateful negotiations, Mr. Hope was ever at the side of Lord Aberdeen, always misrepresenting the attitude of the Church leaders, unable remotely to apprehend the great principles that they believed were at stake, and consistently suggesting that their motives were as unworthy as their cause was unsound. "I warned you of the men you had to deal with. But I know that it requires long knowledge of them to be inclined to suspect." There was little prospect under such auspices that Lord Aberdeen could bring his unique powers of conciliation and justice to help to stem the tide which was flowing with such turbulent violence.

Besides the adverse influence of Mr. Hope, there was a real difference between Lord Aberdeen and



those with whom he tried to negotiate. The Church desired a statute confirming the right of a Veto on the part of the people. Lord Aberdeen hoped, in the words of Dr. Chalmers, "to recognise presbyterial veto instead of a popular veto." When two parties are bent on legislation which is to relieve a felt grievance, each is apt to overlook the point at issue and the state of feeling engendered in the community by the dispute. Lord Aberdeen had had the experience of a personal difficulty in his own parish. He had found the people with whom he was concerned willing to use the veto with great injustice and to the detriment of a man whose whole career would have been ruined had it been exercised. In 1833, the General Assembly, in rejecting the Veto, adopted a resolution to the effect that it was competent for the heads of families in full and regular communion with the Church to object to the settlement of a presentee, and for the Presbytery, if they found the objections were well founded, to reject the presentation. On lines agreed to by the Assembly, Lord Aberdeen thought he saw a means of escape both from the outlook of the law courts and the claims of the people. But popular feeling had not stood still in the intervening years. The Church and its leaders were convinced that the spiritual freedom of the Church was again being tampered with by the State, and the politicians could see nothing of the controversy except that the law as laid down by the courts of the Realm must be obeyed, in spite of what Sir Robert Peel called the "personal feelings" of those who were fighting for the freedom of the Church.

The Whig Government hesitated, and in their inaction the disruption was sealed and the cause lost. The Church hoped at one moment that a measure would be introduced which would recognise the right of the Veto. Lord John Russell told the deputation that the Government would not consent to bring in any such measure.

Chalmers writes :



So this is the end of all our dealings with a government that has kept us waiting eight months to tell us they will do nothing. Let us not despair—our cause is righteous, and though great men may frown, let us trust that the Church's Head will smile. Never let it be said the Church of Scotland blenched before the opposition of men in power. It is when difficulties increase we must become more firm.

With such a "crazed" determination, the Church leaders turned from the Whigs, who had deserted the cause of the National Church, and looked to the Conservatives. It was then that Lord Aberdeen, in conjunction with Sir George Clark and Sir William Rae, met the Non-Intrusion Committee, with the results here recorded.

There followed a long and moderate correspondence between the two leaders, both so eminently fitted to come to an understanding arrangement, had they been allowed to work together in a spirit free from distrust and suspicion.

The point of view of Dr. Chalmers and the Non-Intrusion Committee and that of Lord Aberdeen differed slightly, but in the excited condition of feeling it was a material difference. Lord Aberdeen was willing that the Presbytery *might*, if it thought fit, reject on the ground of unsuitableness, due to inacceptability. The committee desired that the "might" should be read as "must." Dr. Chalmers was very decided in his opinion that the free judgment of the Presbytery, "though not all that the Church might wish, would be, and ought to be, accepted as sufficient."

On these differences between the moderation of Chalmers and the more extreme demands made by the Committee, Mr. Hope writes: "I saw there was a great feeling against Chalmers,—that there is a split."

In February, 1840, Dr. Chalmers writes to Lord Aberdeen:

Our deputation is, I hope, now in London, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Dunlop. The former, I hope you will find a man of moderate counsel recommended by the Duke of Wellington; the latter, of great importance to the Mission, both in being a Whig, and therefore more likely to be admitted into free converse with the Government; and also a person whose ecclesiastical patriotism takes the precedency in his mind of all politics. The most important instruction which they carry with them is to hold equal and free converse with influential men on all sides of politics; and of all the measures which might be canvassed, that they should give their consent to the one which, while it serves both the Veto Act and Non-Intrusion, is likeliest to pass both Houses. Many of us are in terror lest our question be made a political stalking horse. I have to implore your Lordship's full and frequent advice for the prevention of this great evil.

I do hope that our deputation will find both the great parties disposed to coalesce in a common measure, securing the spiritual independence of the Church, and so as to provide, or rather leave us at liberty to provide, for the old constitutional object of Non-Intrusion; else I do not see how a measure will be made to pass through both Houses of Parliament. . . .

I can truly say, that I know of no influential member in either House for whose support I have greater value, or in whose sincere desire for the moral interests of the community I place greater confidence, than in your own.

The correspondence was sent to Mr. Hope. "I need not comment on Chalmers's letters. He plainly differs from the Committee in many important views, but I shall, of course, keep that knowledge wholly

to myself. His letters teem with inconsistencies." The Dean of Faculty concluded his copious remarks with the illuminating prophecy, "If you absolve the courts from control, the Church will soon drive one half of Scotland out of it." One half the ministers and people were to be driven out of the Church by the State endeavouring to use her Courts of Justice in illegal opposition to the sworn statutes of the Revolution Settlement.

In February, Lord Aberdeen notes that Lord John Russell had promised the deputation to bring forward some measure in March :

I see clearly the attempt to establish, in substance, the Veto, although under a different form, and I will do what I can to check them; but a large concession to the people is inevitable. This is the one matter on which I think we differ. . . . I am convinced that the people of the last century have been practically deprived of their ancient right of 'call,' and that it will now be wise and necessary to restore it. The excitement in the country is not to be neglected, not because it is general, but because it is essentially just. I do not suppose they are for the Veto, but they must have the means of stating honest objections of every kind; and the decision of the Presbytery on the *suitableness* of a Minister for a particular charge may in some degree depend on his *acceptableness*.

Lord Aberdeen took the opportunity, when presenting some of the many Non-Intrusion Petitions which were being sent up to both Houses, to speak on Scottish Church affairs. He told the Peers that unless they were personally connected with Scotland they would find it very difficult to form any conception of the nature and extent of the feeling that prevailed—in consequence of the proceedings of the Church Courts and civil tribunals with reference to this matter. He felt he must state his convictions



that the principle of what was called Non-Intrusion had always existed in the Church of Scotland and had always been recognised. It was a sincere and conscientious conviction in the minds of those who adhered to the principle. He then proceeded to point out that some legislative measure was expedient which had for its object the restoration of peace within the borders of the Church, and the healing of the dissensions which now disturbed the country from one end to the other.

In March, he tells Mr. Hope that he had been much importuned to belong to the next General Assembly, "but I have persevered in refusing to do so." It is impossible not to let the imagination stray with regret over all that might have been had this wise Senator taken his place among his compeers in Church and State, and brought his conciliatory counsels to bear on the strife engendered in their midst. It was not to be, and, apart from the focus of unrest, other voices swayed him, and rendered useless his splendid efforts.

When his Bill was ready to present to Parliament Lord Aberdeen showed it to the Deputies from the Assembly. They proposed certain amendments which they said were not inconsistent with the Bill, and which Lord Aberdeen was not unwilling to adopt. Had these amendments been adopted, the course of events would probably have been different.

Unfortunately, the Dean of Faculty was in England, as he had come to place his son at school at Hatfield. Lord Aberdeen was at the Priory, and summoned this worst of counsellors to confer with him. He denounced the amendments, partly as inclining to carry out the popular veto, and on the astonishing ground that they compromised Lord Aberdeen's independence.

It is amazing that Lord Aberdeen should have submitted his judgment to such a mind as Mr. Hope's. Thoroughly self-confident, and possessing that influence which a strong narrow mind of a positive overbearing type often exerts over a mind of much



higher quality, in which self-distrust and humility are leading characteristics, the Dean succeeded in persuading Lord Aberdeen to defer to his advice. Several of the amendments were allowed to stand, but the main clauses of the Bill were untouched. In May, the Bill was read for the first time in the Lords. The leading Scotch peers heartily supported it. Lord Melbourne said a few perfunctory words, committing himself to the statement that "the occasion which had arisen was not by any means so grave and serious" as Lord Aberdeen's speech was calculated to make the House suppose.

On returning from the Lords, he wrote in unusually warm terms to Dr. Chalmers :

*Argyll House,  
May 5, 1840.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot retire to rest this night without informing you that I have presented a Bill to the House of Lords, having for its object the termination of those unhappy differences by which the Church of Scotland is distracted.

In framing this measure I can truly say that I have been solely animated by a desire to confirm and promote the stability and prosperity of our national establishment. It is certain, however, that in making this attempt, I may encounter the opposition of many in Scotland, whose support of the Bill would afford me the greatest satisfaction. Nevertheless, when the difficulty is considered of uniting the conflicting opinions of different persons upon this subject, as well as the imminent perils to which the Church is exposed, I may still hope to receive all those who may not be deterred by conscientious scruples of an invincible character. The question is not now, so much, what is the best and most desirable measure, but what is practicable.

I deceive myself, if the report which you may

receive from Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Hamilton will not show that in all my communications with these gentlemen, I have evinced a sincere desire to meet their views, to the utmost of my power, although, unfortunately, I may not in every instance have been able to adopt their suggestions.

Dr. Chalmers's answer to this letter, so full of a fervent hope that the Bill would effect peace in the distracted councils of the Church, was somewhat cold. He had not then seen the Bill as presented to Parliament, and he writes :

I do hope, therefore, that whatever more may be in the Bill, there will be a clear and unchangeable statement of the Church's competency to judge and to decide on all the circumstances which affect the Christian usefulness of the presentee in the particular parish to which he had been nominated.

In the meantime, Lord Aberdeen consulted with Mr. Hope on the second reading. Lord Melbourne said he did not like the Bill, but that he knew he did not understand it, and he had no confidence in those he was obliged to consult. He said the title of the Bill was a misnomer, and he confounded admission of ministers with presentation :

But the most extraordinary information he gave was, that the Lord Chancellor (Lord Cottenham) said that I had given the Church what they had been trying to obtain for three hundred years without success ! Is not this marvellous ? At all events, it shows what he thinks of the Bill.

Finally, Lord Melbourne, after taking a day to consider the matter, refused to allow the Bill to be read a second time without debate, thinking it would be giving too great sanction to the measure.

Mr. Hope thought it judicious to postpone the second

reading of the Bill till after the meeting of the General Assembly, so as to have no appearance of forestalling the deliberations of that court.

The "Moderate" party in Scotland hailed the Bill with unqualified delight. Mr. Hope reports how Dr. Muir and Mr. Hunter of the Tron, men noted for their piety and eminence, were perfectly delighted with it. Dr. Muir said he had read it five times over, and did not wish one word altered, added, or omitted. He says it places the Church where she ought to be, and with all the power of any right purpose that any Church can desire or any establishment can safely have within herself.

In the meantime, Dr. Chalmers had taken counsel with men as fanatical in their non-intrusion zeal as Mr. Hope was for his Erastian creed. On May 12 Chalmers wrote that, having examined the Bill with inexpressible grief and concern, he was forced to confess himself dissatisfied. There were three fatal objections to the Bill :

First, the obligation laid on the Presbytery to give its judgment exclusively on the reasons, instead of leaving a *liberum arbitrium* in all the circumstances of the case.

Secondly, because the Bill, in its whole tone and structure, subordinates the Church to the civil power in things spiritual; and that by a directory so minute and authoritative, as to lay us open at every hour to the hazard of civil coercion and to the infliction of pains and penalties.

Thirdly, it is substantially the same measure with that which was moved for by Dr. Cook and rejected by the Church—although the Church's acquiescence would have implied no more than a temporary subjection to an act from which she could have released herself at any time; whereas my Lord, and this is a most important consideration, the submission of the Church now to the same act from the hands



of the Legislature would bind us irrevocably and for ever to a state of the law from which we had no power of extricating ourselves.

Dr. Chalmers expressed his conviction that the Bill would meet with determined hostility from the majority of the Church, and, with whatever reluctance, he would find himself ranged with that majority should the Bill be passed in its present form.

On the same date, Mr. Hope urged that Lord Aberdeen should accept no alterations which the Assembly might suggest.

Lord Aberdeen replied to Dr. Chalmers that he was under a misapprehension in supposing that the Bill limits or restricts "what you call the *liberum arbitrium* of the Presbytery in the matter of collation."

He again with judicial calm set out what the Bill attempted to effect, but without being able to convince Dr. Chalmers or the other leaders of the movement. On May 27 the Report of the Non-Intrusion Committee was laid before the General Assembly by Dr. Chalmers. He spoke of the various efforts made by the leading politicians to meet the needs of the Church, and alluded thus to the Bill of Lord Aberdeen :

Your Committee are in no way responsible for its provisions. The noble framer of it had ceased to honour them with his correspondence for some weeks previous to its introduction into Parliament; and coming greatly short even of that measure in favour of which they had been led to anticipate the full consent of all the influential members of both Houses with whom he is associated, the appearance could not fail to be met by them with feelings both of disappointment and surprise.

The Assembly proceeded to discuss the provisions of the Bill, and by a majority of 221 to 134 resolved



that, in its existing form, the Assembly could not acquiesce in it, and that it was the duty of the Church to use every method to prevent its obtaining the sanction of the Legislature.

At the same moment as the principles of the Bill were being rejected by the General Assembly, Lord Aberdeen was addressing the House of Lords in the second reading of his measure.

This speech was the cause of a further estrangement between the two leaders in Church and State. Dr. Chalmers had ceased to be the convener of the Non-Intrusion Committee, whose Report he had presented to the Assembly in a speech which sealed the fate of a good understanding between that Court and Lord Aberdeen's effort at settling the controversy. Lord Aberdeen alluded to Dr. Chalmers as "a reverend gentleman, a great leader in the Assembly, who having brought the Church into a state of jeopardy and peril, had left it to find a way out of the difficulty as well as it could." In the days of voluminous pamphleteering, it was natural Dr. Chalmers should at once publish a tract for the hour, "What Ought the Church and People of Scotland Now to Do?", being a Pamphlet on the Principles of the Church Question with an Appendix on the Politics and Personalities of the Church Question." The title is redolent of the age of polemics in which it was written, and Dr. Chalmers, in resounding phrases, rebukes the Peers for their attitude towards the question of the day in Scotland. "The one nobleman sending forth his wrathful fulmination against the honesty and truth of a Minister, and another laughing it off in his own characteristic way, with a good-natured jeer as a thing of nought."

A youthful observer, the future Duke of Argyll, listening to the debates, made his own comments on the Peers :

During the session of 1840 when on the steps of the throne, I used to hear the Earl of Aberdeen frequently urging the Whig Government to enforce the law against

the Church Assemblies—which meant to compel them to exercise purely spiritual functions at the order of the civil courts. This eminent Scotsman never even seemed to be conscious that there could be a question about the power or the right of the civil courts to do this, nor did I ever hear him even allude to the series of constitutional laws which had expressly denied any such assumption as illegitimate, and a violation of the essential rights of the Christian Church. The love and reverence with which in later years I came to regard Lord Aberdeen cannot prevent me from deploring now, as I deplored at the time, the course taken by that distinguished man in 1840–1842.<sup>1</sup>

In his speech in the House of Lords, Lord Aberdeen had made use of an illustration to show the extremes to which the Non-Intrusionists might go, in which he said a candidate having red hair might be rejected on that account. It gave great offence, and Lord Aberdeen, writing to the Dean, says undoubtedly the red hair was an unlucky and absurd illustration :

But if the Church chose to constitute any such cause a disqualification, I do not see what is to prevent them under the Act. . . . After my confession to you the other day of morbid sensitiveness, you will easily imagine that these attacks are annoying. At the same time, I can have no real cause of discomfort. It is impossible that any fair man should think me more Jesuitical than the parties with whom I have to deal.

Chalmers, in the same spirit, had announced to the Assembly his giving up of every office which he held under that Court. He says not only the fatigues of the work had caused this decision, but “the blasting of all my fondest hopes for the good and peace of our church, in my correspondence with public men.”

<sup>1</sup> Autobiography of George, 8th Duke of Argyll.

In this atmosphere the fate of the Bill was certain. Lord Aberdeen writes :

I met Melbourne accidentally to-day in the Park. He let out the secret, at one moment of his difficulty, when he said that so many of his friends represented populous places, that they found it necessary to look to their constituents. He evidently himself would not object to the Bill going on, and even said it was not too late to withdraw opposition, but I am persuaded that he will not venture to do anything of the kind. I suppose that I shall be obliged in a day or two to declare my intentions respecting the Bill, and unless the Government should make an entire change, of which there is no chance, I strongly incline to abandon it.

This inclination was not acted upon for some time, partly due to the support he received from Sir Robert Peel, who had urged him to proceed with the second reading, and was willing to introduce the Bill into the House of Commons, or give it his support if introduced by any other :

If the Bill should be given up, there will be an opportunity for Peel to express his opinion, for in a committee of supply there will be a grant proposed for building the hall of the Assembly. This will give rise to discussion, and he will avail himself of it; but if the Bill should still be in progress in the House of Lords, it would not be regular or desirable to enter into any debate respecting it. . . . I have seldom been more gratified than by the friendly and zealous concurrence of Peel.

Rejected by the Assembly, unsupported by the Government, and denounced by the Law Lords as containing dangerous concessions to the Church, it



was clear that Lord Aberdeen's Bill had little prospect of becoming law. On the strong advice of Sir Robert Peel, however, he determined to proceed with the measure, and the Bill was accordingly read a second time on June 16, and passed by a large majority.

Lord Melbourne's own opinion was favourable to Lord Aberdeen's Bill; but, on the one hand, the Chancellor and others in the Cabinet were hotly opposed to what seemed to them the grant of undue privileges to the Church, and on the other, the Lord Advocate and party managers in Scotland were urgent that for political reasons he should not offend the extreme Non-Intrusionist party, who were to a great extent supporters of the existing Government. In these circumstances Lord Melbourne found an admirable excuse for indulging his own constitutional disposition to "let things alone." His speech was a curiosity of cautious hedging :

He would not (he said), enter upon the whole question but would only say that it was not so certain that the Bill would decide the question as to make it prudent to proceed with it. He gave no opinion upon the Bill. He did not wish to say whether it was or was not now the law of Scotland, as had been contended, but he meant to say that it was not so certain to be of avail and advantage as to make it prudent for their lordships to proceed. He did not mean to say that a Bill framed in that spirit might not be suited to the occasion, but he thought the House ought not to proceed at present with the measure, seeing that a measure exactly similar might be brought forward on any occasion when time and further experience should have shown that it would be likely to be beneficial.

It then seemed not improbable that, after all, the Bill would become law.

A few days later Lord Aberdeen wrote :



I have been with Lord John this morning, and have fully explained to him my situation and intentions. He is not unwilling to let the Bill pass through the House of Commons, but he is greatly afraid of his friends. Were it not for the Advocate, and Fox Maule, there would be no difficulty at all about the matter. But personally compromised as they are, they cannot give way; and it is scarcely possible for the Government to take it upon themselves to neglect the remonstrances of their own officers. Lord John promised to speak to Melbourne; and he would endeavour with him to see if they could not contrive not to oppose the Bill.

The result was an overture to withdraw opposition to the Bill if Lord Aberdeen would consent to restrict to a majority the right to object given by it to any parishioners. As this alteration would only have made the Bill more distasteful to the Church, and deprived individual parishioners of a right which Lord Aberdeen believed them already to enjoy, and which he thought they ought to enjoy, he was, of course, unable to assent to this proposal, and after passing the Bill through Committee he decided to withdraw it.

Lord Aberdeen felt very deeply the treatment he had received at the hands of the Church leaders. He had, as he himself said, a "habit of believing people," and he had accepted without reserve their expressions of a readiness to accept any substitute for the veto which would secure the rejection of an unfit presentee. He now could not but believe that some of them had all along entertained fixed objects which they had not avowed, with which they knew he had no sympathy, but for which they hoped to engage his support without his own knowledge.

The agitation in favour of Non-Intrusion continued during the autumn and winter. The two leaders had withdrawn from active part, and those who now

headed the party were mostly convinced that the total abolition of patronage was the only safeguard against the intrusion of unacceptable ministers. Lord Aberdeen would not have strongly objected, but in the heated and embittered relations between Church and State, no such measure would have been adopted by either political party or become part of the legislature.

Chalmers had said his last word in the matter. "It is for the Church now to renounce all dependence on men; and persevering in the high walk of duty on which she has entered to prosecute her own objects on her own principles—leaving each party to act as they may."

Never in the history of the Church of Scotland was there a better opportunity for the civil and religious courts of the realm coming to a good understanding. Never were two men in their statesmanship more likely to work together in adapting the constitution of the Church to the growing aspirations of the day. The stars in their courses had brought them in counsel together, at the hour when their sagacity and wisdom might save the State from rushing headlong against every prejudice and principle of which the Church had striven, even to the sin of rebellion, in the preceding centuries. The opportunity was lost, Dr. Chalmers allowed himself to be rushed from one position to another, and seems never to have clearly faced what the abandonment of those positions must mean in the eyes of those who believed that in her attitude the Church was breaking her contracts with the State.

Scots are not prone to forget old jealousies and grievances—rights won at the cost of cruel persecution and of the overthrowing of a dynasty, are rights jealously watched by that party in the State which fear the rise of any unconstitutional power, be it the claim of an anointed King, or the assertion that the Crowned Rights of the Divine Head of the Church were to be above the Statutes enacted by a Whig Government.

The influences of a legal pedant, blinded to all but the letter of the law, and the hot-headed polemics of the Non-Intrusion party, prevailed. Aberdeen and Chalmers were alike powerless in the grip of forces which were as much beyond the control of statecraft as is a mountain torrent when, breaking through every obstacle on its course, it floods and overflows the restraining banks.

The year was closing, not without signs that the ecclesiastical controversy was affecting all sides of Scottish life.

Lord Breadalbane had been elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University, and Lord Aberdeen writes to the sanguine Mr. Hope :

1840, 6th Dec.

We must be prepared for a strong Non-Intrusion demonstration at the installation of Breadalbane at Glasgow, whose election is the greatest triumph which the cause has yet gained. I think considerable exertion will be required to prevent its progress. You know better than I do, but it rather appears to me to be gaining ground.

Lord Aberdeen had a greater power of gauging popular opinion than his correspondent. The next letter to Mr. Hope was on another form of Church government, but in it he clearly lays down his position towards the National Churches of England and Scotland.

12th Dec., 1840.

I suppose you have heard of the Episcopal College which Gladstone and others are attempting to establish. I enclose his letter to me, although I do not trouble you with the detailed plan. I confess I am not surprised at their taking this moment for endeavouring to do something for Episcopacy in Scotland. The disgraceful dissensions in our church afford sufficient encouragement, but it is an act of *quasi-hostility* against our establishment. I have



told him that I can give his plan no encouragement; less now, than ever; that although I greatly prefer many things in the Church of England, I shall not quit the church of my ancestors, until I am thrust out, or until it is impossible to remain in it with honour and a safe conscience.

Mr. Hope replied :

I am very glad that you discouraged Gladstone's proposed Episcopal College. Its main effect would be to draw a more marked line between the Church and the higher classes, which would do mischief, without even advancing their object one inch (even if a right one), of establishing episcopacy. Proselytism by them in Scotland is not only a work of supererogation, but a great error as to their position, and a mistake as to the real good which that communion does in Scotland.

On December 16, 1840, Sir Robert Peel wrote his views to Lord Aberdeen :

I do not much regret, looking at ultimate and permanent results, the delay which has taken place on the Church Question in Scotland.

When there is in the minds of men a disposition to hold such principles as those which are maintained by the Popish Presbyterian party in Scotland, it is better, perhaps, that they should have the opportunity of exhibiting themselves at full length, and of practically manifesting the consequences of their principles, than that any premature effort should be made to check and control them.

I suppose many of them, when they find their own schemes impracticable, will try to shelter their retreat under a popular cry, and be content to transfer to democracy the influence which they wished to secure for the Priesthood.



I must say I think nothing is better calculated to disgust really religious people than the use made by some of those zealots of the name of the "Lord Jesus," and their efforts to get power for themselves, or to injure their neighbours, under the pretended sanction of that sacred authority.

Sir Robert Peel was obviously one of those who held that Presbyter was but Priest writ large. In the House of Commons he had given it as his opinion that the spiritual authority now claimed for the Church of Scotland, he believed to be unjust and illegal, and he would not for the purpose of conciliation give his support to it. He recommended to the Church of Scotland a giving up of personal feelings and a strict obedience to "the law." The Church believed this law to be that of her spiritual freedom in her own courts, not the law as laid down by the civil courts, which had trenched on all the most sacred principles of the Revolution settlement.

Dr. Chalmers had his answer ready for Sir Robert Peel, and took the opportunity at the August meeting of the Assembly's commission. There in the Tron church, to an audience crowded and electric, Dr. Chalmers set forth the principles on which the Church took her stand. He rolled back a phrase used by the Dean of Faculty in his pamphlet, "What firmness had done before, firmness may do again," on the part of a resolute and unyielding Church against her haughty persecutors.

Before long, Peel was to know at first hand what effect "the Popish Presbyterian party" had had on elections in a Parliament in which he was to sit as Prime Minister.

#### LORD ABERDEEN TO MR. HOPE

*Haddo, Jan. 24, 1841.*

I had intended to leave this to-morrow morning. This is now quite impossible. The fall of snow last

night has been so heavy as to render the roads scarcely passable. I shall still leave this to-morrow, unless it should become absolutely impracticable, and plough my way to Stonehaven or Laurencekirk. I believe that I should do a much more sensible, as well as more agreeable, thing by remaining here, and feeding my cows with chopped whins, or anything else, than go and choke myself with the chaff of this Church controversy. I rather like the notion at first, of imitating the position in which M. Thiers has placed France—a sort of armed peace. I think we ought to see what the Government will do, and either assist, or oppose, according to circumstances.

The snowstorm through which Lord Aberdeen had to plough his way to Edinburgh was a striking element in one of the centres of the controversy.

Following the famous presentations to the charges of Auchterarder and Lethendy, yet a third was added in the parish of Marnoch. This charge lay within the Presbytery of Strathbogie, where the seven ministers suspended by the General Assembly from their ministerial duties had been upheld in their livings by the Crown and the civil courts. Their case had been the subject of continuous litigation in all the civil courts, and had become the test of the controversy between the State and the Church. The Presbytery had been upheld by both Lord Aberdeen and Sir Robert Peel, but they lay under the sentence of the supreme court of the Church. Marnoch was a populous parish in Banffshire, lying in a secluded situation along the banks of the Deveron. It was a Crown living, but the Government had signified to the Church it would not press any appointment made by it against the will of the parish. Mr. Edwards, the presentee, was entirely regardless of anything but his own interests; he ignored the unanimous opposition of the parishioners, and demanded that the Presbytery should take him on

trial. The Court of Session upheld his right before the deposed Presbytery. They took Mr. Edwards on trial, and found him duly qualified.

There was then produced this situation: seven ministers suspended by the Church—reposed by the Judges, declared by the one authority to be incapable of performing any official act—recognised by the other authority as the one and only Presbytery of Strathbogie, were decerned and ordained to receive and remit Mr. Edwards as minister of Marnoch. What followed is worth recalling in the words of Dr. Chalmers's biographer, for the scene painted is redolent of that unconquerable spirit which Scotland has always evinced in her people, when the things which belong to their most sacred heritage were touched by the hands of those who appeared to deny their "Claim of Right."

Thursday, the 21st of January, 1841, was the day fixed for this extraordinary ordination. A heavy snowstorm had passed over the country, choking up the public roads, and covering the earth to the depth of two feet and upwards. Deep as the snow lay on the face of the earth, and gathered as it was in large and almost impassable wreaths on every highway and byway in Banff and Aberdeenshire, early on Thursday morning little bands of men from all the neighbouring parishes, moving on in lines, the stoutest in advance, breaking up a path for his companions who followed him, were seen wending their way to the church of Marnoch. In two or three carriages drawn by four horses each the clerical actors and their law agents were conveyed to the same spot. A singular assemblage was gathered there to greet their approach. Upon the trampled and slushy ground around the kirk, two thousand men were standing. The church doors were opened, and the church was instantly and



densely filled—thick groups gathering about doors and windows, who could not gain admission. . . . As the authority of the Presbytery was not recognised by the people, the only alternative left to Mr. Duncan was, as their agent, and in their name, to read two protests, the one signed by all the elders, and the other by four hundred and fifty communicants. These protests objected solemnly “to the qualifications, life and doctrine of the presentee.”

“As agent of the elders, male heads of families, and communicants of Marnoch, I have now only to say, that they take no further part in these unconstitutional proceedings. They wait a better time and another Court. They can have no further business here, and they will, I believe, all accompany me from the church, and leave you to force a minister on a parish against the people’s will, but with scarcely one of the parishioners to witness the deed. . . .”

The people of Marnoch immediately arose from their seats in the body of the church: old men with heads white as the snow that lay deep on their native hills, the middle-aged, and the young who were but rising into life. Gathering up their Bibles and psalm-books, which in country churches often remain there for half a century, they left the church once free to them and theirs, but now given up to the spoiler. They went out, many in tears and all in grief. No word of disrespect or reproach escaped their lips. They went away in the strong conviction that their cause was with the most Powerful, and that with Him rested the redress of all their wrongs. . . . “Will they all leave?” we heard some whispering. Yes, they all left, never to return. The ordination was completed in a church filled by a rush of strangers from without. There was no parallel for it in the annals of the Church. It was performed by a Presbytery of suspended clergymen,



on a call by a single communicant, against the desire of the Patron, in face of the strenuous opposition of a united Christian congregation, in opposition to the express injunction of the General Assembly, at the sole bidding, and under the sole authority of the Court of Session.

Many meetings were held over Scotland to express sympathy with the congregation. Dr. Chalmers was not well enough to attend the meeting held in Edinburgh, but he wrote a letter to the chairman: "May Heaven at length open the eyes of these infatuated men who are now doing so much to hasten a crisis, which they will be the first to deplore." He expressed again that adherence to a name, to which Sir Robert Peel took exception. "Casting the burden of our whole cares upon Him, and confident that out of these tribulations He, in His own good time, will usher in the peace and the purity of better days."

Lord Aberdeen in the meantime was travelling to Edinburgh to meet Mr. Hope, and to report to him the outlook of the Southern Erastians. In the ensuing months, the prospect of a change of Government lay before the country. The falling Ministry of Lord Melbourne paid no attention to Church affairs.

On May 14, Lord Aberdeen writes :

I think the Government must certainly go out in a few days.

*May 27th.*—The dissolution of Parliament is now certain; although it is possible that the present debate may continue many days.

Some reminiscence of the wintry scene at Marnoch, or report of the endless meetings which were filling Scotland with their tumultuous sound, probably reached Lord Aberdeen. "You may believe," he

reports, "that no human being in this part of the world cares sixpence for the Scotch Church at such a moment or ever troubles his head about it."

Lord Aberdeen writes to Mr. Hope that he intends spending the holidays with Lord John Russell, "whom I always like to meet, and with whom I am always personally good friends." He further says :

*June 1, 1841.*—I continue to have much discussion with Lord John. He still adheres to the necessity of having a majority to dissent. Such is his opinion of the Presbyteries, that he fears they will excite the objections of a few, in order to give effect to them afterwards.

He told me that the matter had been discussed some time ago in the Cabinet, and that it was determined they should support my Bill, if I would agree to adopt the provisions of a majority, and that Melbourne was commissioned to communicate with me on the subject. He never did so, however,—at least in this sense; and I never knew until yesterday that such had been the decision of the Cabinet.

*June 4, 1841.*—The ministerial crisis here is so much more interesting, that very little is thought about the Scotch Church. Beyond a passing joke, it is scarcely ever mentioned. I hope the proceedings of the Assembly will be printed in the same manner as those of last year. I observed that Chalmers' speech had been transferred at full length to the *Times*. This is rather ominous. It now remains to be seen what effect the Church cry may be made to produce in Scotland. I have some misgivings, but hope they may prove groundless. The account of our election prospects in England is particularly favourable, the cry of cheap bread is by no means so attractive as might be imagined.

The succeeding months are replete with correspondence concerning the elections in Scotland. Both Melbourne and Sir Robert Peel held their hands from any clear statement as to the trouble within the Church. Both were afraid of the effect on the political parties. Sir Robert Peel was aware that the Tory Non-Intrusionists were quite as keen as their Whig brethren, and political agents were distracted to find that the people were more concerned with the things of the Spirit than the price of the bread that perisheth.

The elections gave the Conservatives a decided majority, and those who were about to form the Government had to face the situation. Naturally, as politicians first, and, secondly, as knowing little of the influences at work among the Scottish people, statesmen continued to move along the same lines as Lord Melbourne—striving how they could best act for a quiet life.

Mr. Thomson of Banchory, a Conservative concerned with local politics, put a review of the whole conditions before Lord Aberdeen :

*14th Aug., 1841.*—The last election is the first general election in which the principles of Non-Intrusion have come into play, and that only to a partial extent; and yet the result has been most striking, for of the members returned by Scotland, thus far much more than a half are pledged to Non-Intrusion principles, or rather to support the majority of the General Assembly. Further, in almost all the cases where contests have taken place, in Scotland, the result has been in favour of the Non-Intrusion candidate, and in Glasgow, though the Conservative candidate was defeated, it was this Church question alone which enabled him to come so close to his Radical opponents. . . . I have been often asked what I think will be the effect of this question on the next general election,—supposing it to remain



unsettled, and the election to take place some years hence. From what I have seen at the late election, and from what I see and hear daily around me, I have not a doubt that the Non-Intrusion Party will decide every contested election. I have now had a good deal of experience in county canvassing, and I have been led to the conclusion that the tenantry of Scotland are, on the whole, very indifferent to points of mere civil politics,—they feel no great interest in either party, and therefore they will not quarrel with their landlords on such subjects, but vote along with them,—and this you will see is the case on both sides all over the country. But in this Church Question, I am firmly persuaded that the influence of the landlords will be absolutely nothing over those who are Non-Intrusionists. On points which involve religious and Presbyterian principles, the tenantry of Scotland will be found as inflexible as their forefathers.

It may be said that the Non-Intrusion party are among the voters but a handful, but it must be remembered that in general they are men of high moral and religious character, and as such exercising considerable influence in their several spheres,—men who will adhere to their principles and carry them out, without flinching to the end. If you look all over Scotland you will find in almost every county and city laymen of respectable character and station, and some of them men of considerable influence, avowing their adherence to the majority of the General Assembly. This party is steadily increasing. Here I must notice another and not an unimportant feature in the case. The women of Scotland are almost all zealous Non-Intrusionists, and almost all ranged on the side of the popular ministers. They have not a little influence over their fathers,



husbands and brothers,—but they have still more over the rising generation and are training up their sons to admire and support whatever party in the State will stand by and support their favourite preachers.

This memorandum on the condition of affairs in Scotland covers the whole ground, and is written in a spirit very different from that of Mr. Hope. Through the whole of the elections, his pen was never weary advising Lord Aberdeen on the demerits of the Non-Intrusion candidates, and minimising their power on the hustings. Of the Church party, he says, “No one will doubt—either (1) that they are wholly governed and moved by Whigs as their prompters; or (2) that they are totally devoid of all principle or consistency.”

The Non-Intrusion leaders he describes as bitter Whigs or Radicals. “Both parties are now decidedly against them, and you will mistake the state of things if you do not act boldly on that fact, supposing opportunity to offer.” Dr. Chalmers was sly and underhand, Dr. Candlish an imp or a firebrand, and Lord Aberdeen was exhorted to have no dealings with those who it was “positively dangerous to come near. They may talk big, but will do nothing.”

In a very different vein, Mr. Thomson elaborates his theme:

What will be the result of having this question open and unsettled for some years to come? It can only be the vast strengthening of the Non-Intrusion party both in the Church courts and among the people. Whenever a vacancy at present occurs, the parishioners at once become Non-Intrusionists for the time. There is hardly such a thing already to be found among the licentiates of the Church as a young man who is not a Non-Intrusionist, whatever other opinions he may hold; hence it follows the Church Courts must of necessity before long be filled with Non-Intrusionists. . . .

What will be the result if the Conservatives resolve to attempt to coerce the majority of the Assembly? The first and immediate result must be the overthrow of the Church as an effective Establishment, possessed of the confidence and affection of the greater part of the people of Scotland, for there cannot be a doubt that the majority of the Assembly are the popular ministers, and that when they leave the Church they will take the greater part of the people with them.

Both ministers and people thus extruded from the Church will become the decided opponents of the Government who have so treated them, and not unlikely the enemy of all Ecclesiastical Establishments.

Mr. Thomson states the confusion into which the country would be thrown by any coercive legislation. There is no enmity so bitter as that excited by ecclesiastical disputes. He examines the result if Parliament passed a law in conformity with the principles of the majority of the Assembly. They naturally would be gratified and become grateful supporters of the party in the State from whom this boon had been obtained :

It is only in conformity with their own principles to obey it as soon as it becomes the law of the land. They will be situated just like the Tory party with the Reform Bill. We disliked it most cordially—did all we could to prevent it passing; but being defeated, we submitted to it, and now we have discovered that we can manage with it a great deal better than we expected.

In fair practice your Bill would have given the Church what it wants, but I admit that I can now see more clearly than I did at first, that it does not give in abstract theory what the Church expects.

The letter was sent by Lord Aberdeen to Mr. Hope; his comment was unusually brief :

I have no doubt such appeals as Thomson's, and much of Mr. Candlish's language, are the result of the utmost alarm for the consequences of their own acts.

Meantime, much had happened within the Church. John, the seventh Duke of Argyll, had given notice in the House of Lords of his intention to introduce a Bill for the settlement of the question of patronage. It followed the lines of the Veto Bill, differing only from it by extending the right of dissent to all male communicants, instead of restricting it to the heads of families. It also made provision that the Veto should be set aside, if it sprang from factious or causeless prejudice.

The scope of the Bill had always been the subject of strong animadversion from Mr. Hope, and possibly Lord Aberdeen, having seen his own efforts rejected by the Assembly and left unsupported in Parliament, was not in a mood to see the merits of a rival Bill which was on more democratic lines than his own.

Mr. Hope says :

As to the Duke's Bill, it is, indeed, the Veto in the very worst form. I hear young Lord Lorne is his father's great adviser—said lad being wholly taken up about the powers of the Church, so as to alarm many of them for the state of excitement which he has evinced. The Duke of Argyll himself cannot understand anything about the subject.

Lord Aberdeen spoke against the Bill when it was introduced in the Lords. Writing to Mr. Hope, he characteristically says : "I think I exposed very effectually the whole character of the Anti-Patronage proceedings, but as this was done with some bitterness, I ought not to be sorry that it is not reported."

The further consideration of the Duke of Argyll's Bill was postponed until after the meeting of the



General Assembly. Within that Court its provisions met with favour and Dr. Candlish made an appeal to the moderate party to withdraw their opposition to it. This was not done, but the Assembly passed a vote of approval for the measure by two to one. Once again, the state of political parties intervened to allow the full effect of the Assembly's vote to be felt within the Parliament. Before the Bill reached the second reading the elections decided the fate of the Melbourne Government, and on August 30 Sir Robert Peel was the head of the strongest Government that the country had known for long.

The General Assembly had taken fateful measures with regard to the Strathbogie Presbytery.

Dr. Chalmers moved that the seven ministers were guilty of offences against the authority of the Church courts in proceeding at the instance of the Court of Sessions to induct the presentee to Marnoch parish. The sentence of deposition was passed without a vote, but a protest from the Moderate party was read and signed by many members.

Lord Aberdeen noted the proceedings of the Assembly with increasing anxiety.

We must now think [he says, writing to Mr. Hope in June] what is the best course to adopt under the circumstances in which the Church is placed by the recent decisions of the Assembly. In the first place, I presume the Strathbogie ministers will petition Parliament forthwith.

I do not know what may be the case, but I think it not very unlikely that the Duke of Argyll, fortified by the support of the Assembly, may move the second reading of his Bill. Should he do so, it has occurred to me that I might adopt a course which possibly would lead to some good result. I might decide on not opposing the second reading of the Bill, but announce my intention of amending it in the Committee, especially with the view of excluding

the principle of the Veto. In short, I might so change his Bill as to make its essentials conformable to my own. I think I could manage to do this without much difficulty; and when done, it probably would be less unacceptable to the majority of the Assembly, and less humiliating to them, than to return to my original Bill.

Mr. Hope's letters in the months that followed the return of Sir Robert Peel to office were chiefly concerned with writing voluminously, of course, but not modestly, on his own "ambition to be Lord Justice Clerk." His services to the party and his attitude towards the Non-Intrusionists secured for him this honourable estate, and, his personal ambition gratified, the Lord Justice Clerk set himself with renewed energy to complete the ruin of the Church within the State.

Yet another political complication added to the difficulties of the Government. Various negotiations had been carried on by those who were to be in power with the Non-Intrusion party. Mr. Hope had an interview with Dr. Candlish, and he duly reported on it:

They will take, however grumblingly,—Candlish said he would—a Bill giving the Church full power to deal with opposition to a presentee as they thought it fitting for the parish. He is obstinate in prejudice against your Bill. He admitted that I had satisfactorily in conversation defined the jurisdiction of the Church, but said we should be found to differ when it was put on paper; declared that you had always drawn back when they gave you their view of jurisdiction over opposition to the presentee, and yet did not justify as correct what you so rejected. I had a long discussion as to the Call, in which he admitted they could not and would

not stand on concurrence of any number being required, or any consent being necessary.

The point of apparent widest difference is the extravagant pretension that no Court whatever can decide, as to an Established Church, what is within her competency and what not—on this point he was extravagant, confused, and inconsistent.

The signs of the times had had some effect even on Mr. Hope. He writes :

I think the call may really be brought within the principle on which your Bill is framed, though not so good or sound a mode of dealing with the question. Candlish greatly preferred the Call, for he said frankly they were so committed to the Veto being imperative that it made it awkward for them to take the principle of your Bill, supposing it to be satisfactorily brought out, while he obstinately denied that it was in your Bill, a point on which I found he was not penetrable to reason at all.

Everybody concerned being more “penetrable to reason,” a Bill was duly prepared, different in form, but containing the main principles of Lord Aberdeen’s Bill. It was agreed that Sir George Sinclair should receive power from the Church authorities to propose to the Government such a Bill, and that the Government should accept it. Dr. Candlish was in London, and wrote regretting that the Bill gave such a minimum, but he would accept it, as it would enable them to remain in the Church and do the Church’s business. Mr. Hope saw nothing in all this but a *saute qui peut* : “I have no doubt that they have found (as I told Candlish), that but few would follow them into secession, and their language is now as to what will enable them to remain in the Church.” Sir James Graham reported seeing the Deputation with Peel :



The case has now assumed quite another shape. He asks for confirmation of the Church's agreement, and thinking it difficult to legislate at once, he suggests as a pledge of the sincerity of the Government that we may suspend the exercise of the Crown Church Patronage in the expectation of an early amicable settlement. Your measure, I begin to hope, will come right at last.

Once again the fair promise was to be disappointed. Sir William Rae, the new Lord Advocate, during his election in Bute had gone far in support of the Non-Intrusion party. Mr. Hope says :

He committed himself in the winter of 1840 to Chalmers in a way and to an extent which Rae did not himself (full of the prejudices and real ignorance of an Episcopalian, despising the whole affair of the Scotch Church), understand, and he was also infected with the miserable delusion that they could turn the question to account in politics.

Whether Chalmers had "got hold" of the Lord Advocate's Episcopal mind or not, he did not go back on his expressed views, when on taking office he had to vacate his seat and stand again for election. He there and then announced that the Government had a measure in view for the settlement of the Church question, and that it would go beyond that of the Duke of Argyll. On the first of October, Lord Aberdeen had written :

My dear Hope, I think the Church affair looks well, but we can do nothing before the prorogation of Parliament. We must preserve the same attitude during the recess; and if we can bring the leaders to a perfect understanding, we may proceed to legislate at once on the meeting of Parliament.

Mr. Hope reports the leaders as much excited by the speech (the Lord Advocate's), and the majority rejected the proposed plan at a meeting of the Non-Intrusion Committee. The Committee's view was: "Here it is announced that the Government have a plan; you see how it is described! How absurd it is in us now to agree to something so far short of the lowest meaning that the Lord Advocate's words are susceptible of." Naturally, the Lord Advocate's blundering caused grave disappointment to Lord Aberdeen and the few in the Cabinet who took any interest in a matter which was convulsing "remote" Scotland.

Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham were so sure of success that they had discussed whether the Session should not be prolonged in order to pass the necessary Bill.

Sir James Graham wrote it was "most tantalising and annoying." He thought Rae should publish a correction of his speech and endeavour to remove the false impression he had produced. No time was to be lost.

This course was taken, but once again it was too late and the mischief had been done. Negotiations were renewed, and a half-hearted acceptance of Lord Aberdeen's Bill was given by the Assembly Committee. "The golden moment" was lost. The Committee raised its demands, and when this was pointed out, the Assembly said that they had accepted the original one under a misapprehension. They still believed that the Government had better terms in reserve. Lord Aberdeen thought that all negotiations should be suspended with the dominant party. "They know now what the Government would give, and we may listen to, but not invite any other."

As far as Lord Aberdeen was concerned the year 1842 was comparatively quiet as regards the Church of Scotland. His work at the Foreign Office hindered his taking any active part in Scottish affairs, and the intolerant violence that had now set in must have

greatly alienated such a mind as his from the whole controversy.

On May 25, 1842, the General Assembly adopted "the Claim of Right," and at a convocation of Non-Intrusionists held in Glasgow the following November, secession was decided upon in the event of the Claim of Right being rejected.

That a schism must come was clear, and Lord Aberdeen, in his usual manner, set himself to consider how it could be limited to the smallest dimensions. Mr. Hope had now attained the summit of his ambition; he had become Lord Justice Clerk, and he was about to witness the result of his work in the Disruption of 1843.

I do not agree with you [Lord Aberdeen wrote on March 10, 1843], in the opinion you express of the inexpediency of attempting anything at present. I am inclined to think that we ought to make an effort to prevent the great secession which now seems inevitable.

I believe we may carry through Parliament anything we think likely to be of use. If Parliament and the Government are united in their support of that which will satisfy all the reasonable portion of the Church we may hope matters will gradually become tranquil.

On March 28 he says :

I do not now think there is much probability of a Bill being attempted. I was the only person who desired it, and this was chiefly with a wish to save these poor fellows if possible.

The hour and the moment had passed. The reasonable portion of the Church were a small minority, and "the poor fellows" were the majority, whom no reason could tranquillise, and who were to sweep half Scotland with them in headlong career.



Sir James Graham in later years expressed in strong terms his bitter regret that he had disregarded Lord Aberdeen's deliberate and independent judgment; "the only time I ever did so," he said.

What prevailed was the strong and vehement opposition of the Lord Justice Clerk, whose fanaticism was on a level with that of the Disruption party, though he lacked their vision of a Spiritual Power above that of the secular.

The offer of legislation was held back till after the month of May, when the strength of the secession was proved. Its size must have surprised the this man of the law. Lord Stanmore comments: "It is curious to observe how often the acutest lawyers are deceived by their over-estimate of the power of the written law." Lord Aberdeen reintroduced his Bill, as the intrusion of unfit persons did not cease with the secession. The Church of Scotland still needed that protection. "The Aberdeen Act" was passed, but the English Law Lords fought it, as giving "too much power to the Church." This is an indication what chance the Claim of Right would have had in the British Parliament. The Bill passed in August, 1843, and remained in force till the abolition of patronage in 1874.

## CHAPTER X

### PART I

#### SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE (1841-1846)

“Freedom is recreated year by year,  
In hearts wide open on the Godward side,  
In souls calm cadenced as the whirling sphere,  
In minds that sway the future like a tide.”

*Lowell.*

LORD ABERDEEN, after the overthrow of the Melbourne Ministry in 1841, returned once more to the Foreign Office. Thirteen years had elapsed since he left that post, and he returned to it possessed with a very different authority from that which he had exercised under Wellington. The country knew him better and trusted him more. The Duke had been his senior in years and in reputation, and Aberdeen showed a deference to his personality, if not to his opinions, which he did not give to Sir Robert Peel. For one thing, they had grown up on a footing of perfect equality, and a knowledge of each other which had existed since boyhood. The Duke's experience had been in foreign affairs, and they interested him more, and he understood them better, than he did the affairs of home. Peel, on the other hand, was aware of his own ignorance, and he had a complete confidence in Lord Aberdeen's knowledge and judgment, which only grew with the years in which they were associated.

These five years at the Foreign Office were therefore his happiest, and unquestionably the most successful of all his official career. This must be remembered by those who only think of him as the Queen's Prime Minister in the Crimean War.

His first great work, and his chief anxiety, was to

establish friendly relations with France. On two occasions the countries were so near the breaking-point that, much as he liked the office, and complete as was his confidence in the Peel Government, he had to consider whether he could honourably stay in the Ministry.

Our relations with France had best be given in Lord Stanmore's own words :

The present generation is hardly able to estimate the difficulties of effecting such an understanding. The manners and character of the French are no longer regarded by the average Englishman with contempt and ridicule. France as a nation is now neither hated nor feared by England, and while it must be confessed that antipathy to England is still too common in France, it does not possess the same intensity as during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In 1841, France was still, and justly, regarded as the most formidable enemy with which England could be called on to contend in Europe. M. Thiers had stimulated the ill-feeling in France, and had led the two countries to the brink of war, and Lord Palmerston had not helped by the want of consideration he had shown to her susceptibilities. For this state of things it was Lord Aberdeen's aim to substitute a cordial alliance. He wished to be on friendly terms with France, but he wanted also to be on intimate relations with those Powers the alliance with whom would act as a check on France. He wanted our relations with France to be understood on the Continent, and that the Great Powers should feel nothing had been done to disturb them.

On the part of France and Louis Philippe his advances were cordially met, and the friendship and likeness between the two Ministers, Guizot and Aberdeen, helped greatly in the relations of the two countries.



Each of them was a scholar and a philosopher. Public affairs came to both as an accident of life, and were not the absorbing interest. Both had a reserved and austere manner, which covered and in part concealed a tenderness little suspected by the world around them.

Both were sincerely and simply religious, and had a rigid standard of public virtue. Each loved peace for its own sake, and both, we are told, "underrated the amount of ability involved in military exploits." They were soon united not only as public men, but in the ties of strong personal affection.

Their difficulty lay, not in their mutual understanding, but in the action of their subordinates in both countries. From the Ambassador to the Consul, the prevalent opinion was that opposition to France was the soundest English policy. These ideas dominated in England, but "English public servants may differ or even despise their chiefs, but they usually obey them." The bonds of discipline were much looser in France. French diplomatists were indignant with their Minister, whose "tameness" they stigmatised as corrupted by *la perfide Albion*. This was brought to a head by an obscure incident in Tahiti, where an English subject, who had been a missionary and subsequently a consul, but who at the time in question was neither the one nor the other, was, on political grounds, imprisoned with some harshness and indignity by the French Governor.

Had Palmerston been Foreign Secretary, and had Thiers occupied the same post in France, war would almost certainly have ensued. The excitement in both countries was intense. Mr. Pritchard's double status made the demand for punishment of the outrage almost unanimous from all parties. Sir Robert Peel was also carried away by the torrent of feeling, and his speech on the occasion did not make Lord Aberdeen's task an easy one.

Guizot and Aberdeen were both determined that as long as they were Ministers there should be no war,

and both would have resigned had war been declared. A majority of the English Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, were for taking measures which would, in Lord Aberdeen's opinion, have rendered war inevitable. The indemnity which the French undertook to pay to the aggrieved Englishman had to be paid from the King's Civil List, as no vote for its payment could be proposed to the Chamber of Deputies.

The two Ministers had agreed to resign on the same day, and Lord Aberdeen's letter to Princess Lieven shows how near was the crisis :

Fortunately, at the last moment, we have been enabled to bring everything right, and I trust that the Queen's speech yesterday will put an end to all warlike speculations here, and throughout Europe. But you may imagine how very critical our situation must have been, when I tell you that the speech was read and approved by the Queen in Council at Windsor on Tuesday, and that it did not contain a single word of allusion to France, or to any foreign matter whatever.

This silence would have been eloquent, and the lamentable consequences awaiting us would have been as clearly announced by it as by any words.

A few days later he wrote to Princess Lieven :

When you unite me with M. Guizot as the personification of peace, you say all that I most delight to hear. In truth, I do not think it is easy for either of us to become a war minister.

You have known me long, and you know that my general opinions and tendencies have not been much towards France. There is a levity and a restlessness in their proceedings, even under any Government, which inspires me with some alarm. I am, never-

theless, profoundly convinced of the wisdom and necessity of endeavouring to preserve a close alliance, and I believe this to be required by the interests of both countries, and for the peace of the world.

Again he writes :

I saw with astonishment and regret, but it was impossible to deny, that persons of all ranks and classes had made up their minds to war : even those from whom it could least have been expected. People are easily reconciled to what they believe to be inevitable.

I rejoice that we have escaped this horrible calamity, but we must be very careful, and endeavour to preserve peace in the spirit of peace. I see with dread that a single spark may kindle a conflagration, which we shall in vain labour to extinguish.

In 1843 a popular revolution imposed upon the King of Greece a highly democratic constitution. This revolution came from the Greek people, and was not caused by any of the meddling policy of England. Lord Aberdeen recognised it as the will of the Greek people, and he hailed it as a wise and judicious step. He thought that the Greeks were asserting their right and their power to rule their own land. Sir Robert Peel did not go as far as this, and Lord Aberdeen wrote that he had toned down the terms of approval. He did this at the instance of the Prime Minister, but he says :

I think it will be desirable that we should take our ground at once in support of the Greek Revolution. I have never known a change more imperatively called for, more fully justified, or more wisely carried into effect.

He had no belief in any movement towards independence which was suggested or bolstered up



by foreign *States*. If such action were needed, then the movement was not strong enough within, and no good could come of foreign interference. He knew well how the English would feel if Germany or France interfered with the course of our domestic affairs, and he held the view that the national pride of foreigners was quite as susceptible as our own.

His advice was not accepted in his day. Greece was allowed no free play for her Constitution, but was distracted by the intrigues and animosities of the English and French Ministers.

He animadverted vigorously to the British Minister, Sir Edmund Lyons, afterwards Lord Lyons, on the part he played "and the violent spirit of partisanship" which he had exhibited.

Neither did Lord Aberdeen conceal from M. Guizot his opinion of the French Minister, M. Piscatory, and his condemnation of him was as severe as that passed on Sir Edmund Lyons.

So it was at Athens. The misunderstandings and intrigues there led on to those more serious troubles which come under the head of the Spanish marriages.

Peel's Ministry fell in 1846, and the Spanish controversy, though begun in his time, continued after he had left the Foreign Office. Lord Stanmore certainly believed the course of those events would have been different had the good relations Aberdeen and Guizot had endeavoured to establish between the Governments been maintained.

In 1845, though Lord Aberdeen had succeeded in establishing a French alliance, greatly assisted by the mutual visits paid to Windsor by Louis Philippe and by the Queen to Paris, he felt his position difficult and irksome. England remained hostile to France, every act was treated with suspicion, and her position was looked on with intense jealousy. The opposition, of course, clamoured that undue deference was being shown to a foreign Power, but Aberdeen also knew that his own colleagues were not united, and that

several were full of distrust. Peel and Graham were always ready to put the worst construction on every act of the French Government. Graham expressed regret in later years for the groundless fears he had so often expressed. Lord Aberdeen viewed the situation with alarm, and in September, 1845, he wrote to Peel, stating our relations with France, and setting forth that it would be the safest course to allow him to retire from office.

In the letter he said :

It is my deliberate and firm conviction that there is less reason to distrust the French Government, and to doubt the continuance of peace, at the present moment, than there was four years ago, when your administration was first formed.

I fully admit that, in spite of all calculation, it is possible that war may suddenly, and when least expected, take place. It is also certain that, sooner or later, this calamity must fall upon us. Every reasonable degree of preparation for such a contingency is justifiable, and even necessary; but the character of the measures adopted will, of course, depend upon the greater or less amount of apprehension under which we act.

It seems to me that we are now acting under the influence of a panic, both with respect to the intentions of France and our own real condition, and that such a course of conduct has a direct tendency to produce the very evil it is intended to avert.

After referring to the fortifications at our seaports, he says they are not aggressive, and need not excite alarm. The preparation of "our *advanced* ships" he regards as of a different character, and notes there has been more activity with these in the last months than there has been for the three preceding years.

If it be true, as I have been told, that the ships have *actually got their water on board*, I should be disposed to regard it as the evidence of childish restlessness. Our neighbours [he thinks], will give us credit for more serious intentions than we probably entertain.

After reference to the Duke of Wellington's "strong opinions," Lord Aberdeen remarks that his position is increasingly difficult.

He must necessarily consider me as the only obstacle to the adoption of measures which he sincerely believes to be indispensable to the safety and welfare of the country. Under all the circumstances to which I have referred, and the apprehensions I entertain, it is my belief that it will be the safest course for you to allow me now to retire from the Government.

He refers to his dislike of office; his health was not as good as it used to be—all call him to resign. He adds :

"No other motive will be assigned, and it will be the more easy to sanction this, as I have no wish ever to enter the House of Lords again."

Sir Robert replied that, whatever reasons Lord Aberdeen might give, the real ones would soon leak out, and with "the most disastrous results." He could not be replaced by any one as Foreign Minister, and if he were to resign, his loss would be irreparable, adding a postscript in terms of affection such as he seldom used.

Lord Aberdeen did not resign, and the war party in the Cabinet for the time held their peace. He sent Peel a letter from M. Guizot to read, and he observed that Guizot agreed with him that "the old maxim of preparing for war in order to preserve peace was entirely inapplicable to the condition of great



powers, and to the political system of modern times, and the present state of society.”

Aberdeen closes with this description of the situation :

I fully subscribe to the general truth of your description of the past and present state of France, and of the French people and Government; but was not all this well known four years ago?

France, then, as now had an army of 350,000 men, the fortifications of Paris were then in progress, and revolutionary changes of every kind had already taken place. Nevertheless we thought it possible, not only to remain at peace with France, but to live and act with her in the spirit of peace and friendship. Our policy is now changed, and every newspaper is filled with the account of our hostile preparations. We still talk of peace, having war in our hearts. I do not conceive the possibility of our intercourse with foreign powers being at all practically affected by the state of our preparations. If a knowledge of the wealth, activity, patriotism and courage of the people cannot give us all the confidence we need on such occasions, it is not more batteries and guns in position, or ships of war more or less advanced that will do it.

He says, on looking over the country, that the feeling is so irrational, it deserves no other name than panic. As one illustration among many, he cites an event which happened at Sheerness.

“Two French captains arrive there in order to provide themselves with coal. The Port Admiral invites them to dinner, but before sitting down and fulfilling all the duties of hospitality, he is greatly relieved in the absence of his flagship, by having ascertained that, in the case of necessity, 450 men could be poured into the dockyard in the course of a few minutes!

If we act under the influence of such feelings as these, it is not likely that we should act wisely."

The following letters, although written at the beginning of the period dealt with in this chapter, are here inserted because of the further light thrown upon the events alluded to in the foregoing pages.

(It will be observed that these letters, with the exception of the last, were written previous to the formation of Sir Robert Peel's Administration in September of that year.)

#### LORD ABERDEEN TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Edinburgh, Jan. 28, 1841.*

The Papers of this morning have brought us the Queen's speech delivered the day before yesterday, although they contain nothing of the debate on the Address.

In reading this speech, I cannot help expressing my astonishment and strong disapprobation of the absence of all conciliatory expressions towards the French Government, and indeed the omission of any mention of France altogether. This appears to me almost incredible; and, if it were possible to believe such a thing, would almost imply a desire to preserve alive that spirit of irritation and resentment which unfortunately exists in France. A few kind and civil phrases might have been so easily introduced; and, appearing in such a document as the Queen's speech, would very probably have done much to allay the violence of this national animosity. I regret that I was not in the House of Lords, in order to notice this omission on the part of the Government; but I hope it will have been done by others.

It is unpardonable not to give to the present Government of France all the support in our power,

so far as it is compatible with the honour and interests of our own country. They deserve it as honest men, and as lovers of peace.

I see you are still a little alarmed at the hostile attitude of the Great Powers of Europe; but I am disposed to be somewhat of an optimist in this matter. I feel certain that the Allies are all desirous of seeing France again established in her position of natural power and influence, and acting in concert with them. This being the case, it is impossible that it should not be brought about by some mode or other. France cannot go to war for insults purely imaginary; and if the Powers are sincere and honest, notwithstanding some want of courtesy, they will at last succeed in renewing the former footing of friendship.

I am by no means desirous, however, of seeing renewed the exclusive alliance between France and England; if such in fact ever existed; for it seems to me that it was not so much the terms of our alliance, as our neglect and insolence towards other Powers, which constituted our bond of union with France.

As the most powerful and influential Government in Europe, no doubt the disposition and policy of France must always be an object of the deepest interest to this country; and to render this policy pacific must be the real desire of every British Government. There can be no great danger of war in Europe, unless it should come from France; and as I believe that England is more interested in the preservation of peace than any other country, there is nothing we ought not to do, consistently with honour, to encourage France in the adoption of a similar policy.

But all this may be done without any exclusive alliance, and without insulting the rest of the world. I have been led to make these remarks, in consequence of the omission.



## TO THE SAME

*Argyll House, Feb. 5, 1841.*

MY DEAR PRINCESS,

I wrote to you from Edinburgh, immediately on seeing the Queen's speech; and you will have observed that Peel commented on the omission which so much excited my indignation. I hear that he did so with great effect; and the only thing I lament is that he did not move an amendment, in order to supply the deficiency; which he would have carried triumphantly; and which would have operated as a tacit censure on the Government. You will also have seen that the language of both Peel and the Duke with respect to France was very much the same as that which you have always heard from me, although we have had no concert on the subject. It is clear that, although we have no fancy for an exclusive alliance, we are all equally disposed to preserve peace, and to cultivate the friendship of France.

The first matter, to which you may naturally expect me to look, or, at all events, about which you will desire to learn my views, is the situation of our ministry. Now, it is a very remarkable fact that, notwithstanding the decisive, and certainly brilliant success which has crowned their operations in the Levant, they have not in the slightest degree improved their position at home. This success, rapid and conclusive as it has been, seems to have produced no effect whatever. On the contrary the symptoms of weakness on the part of the Government have recently become more apparent. In the beginning of this week we have carried two elections in large towns, substituting in each a Conservative for a Whig. This is surely a heavy blow, and a striking indication

of increasing weakness. Two or three more successes of this kind, as vacancies occur, would actually place the Government in a minority.

In this state of things therefore, you perceive there can be no stability. At the same time, I am not prepared to say that I see clearly what is to lead to their destruction. Even if Stanley's Irish Bill should be carried, although the disgrace and degradation of the Government would be complete, I do not know that it would necessarily lead to their resignation.

I believe, however, that Lord Melbourne entertains gloomy anticipations of the result of the session now commenced. You know that I am never disposed to feel very confident about the overthrow of the Government.

I have found Peel well, and in great spirits. The Duke of Wellington also is wonderfully recovered, and much improved in appearance. He assures me that he has not been in better health for twenty years; but we must unfortunately admit that, at seventy-two, the effects of age, even without disease, become perceptible. I think the Duke is more impressed with a conviction of the extreme uncertainty of the preservation of peace in Europe than I had hoped to find in him. It is, however, but too true that unless some means be found to change, and speedily too, the present position and preparations of the great Powers, war may at any time be the result, in spite of the best inclination to avoid it.

I see that the fortification has been decreed by a great majority, and I have read M. Guizot's speech, which you had the goodness to send me. It seems to have produced a great effect; but I confess that I think it involves a paradox, and is quite inconclusive. He says that it is a pacific measure. Now,

if the States of Europe entertained the desire of invading France, this might be true; for it would make them pause, and reflect very seriously before they made the attempt. But we know that this is so far from being the case, that the very reverse is the fact. I do not believe that in any country in Europe there exists the least desire to invade France, or to touch the French territory. On the other hand, it is quite indubitable that a powerful party is to be found in France, how numerous and influential remains to be seen, who think of nothing but foreign conquest. The fortresses of Germany are, in the Guizot sense, truly the guarantees of peace, but the fortification of Paris gives an efficient support to the project of the war party.

In the meantime, it is the triumph of M. Thiers. You adopt his policy, you maintain his amusements, you execute his greatest project all conceived by him in the spirit of hostility, almost indeed by his own confession, intended to lead to it in the spring. Is not this a false position for a sincere lover of peace?

The fortification of Paris is a measure to which no foreign State has any right to object, and with which we have nothing to do. But you may depend upon it, that it is not a mere military affair. It is a measure of incalculable importance; and if completed, will exercise some great influence on the future destiny of France. What this may be, I know not; nor do I think it can now be clearly discerned by any one; but I am satisfied that it will operate in some manner very different from that which is intended.

*Argyll House, May 8, 1841.*

MY DEAR PRINCESS,

You may be sure that I have not only not forgotten you during our prolonged ministerial crisis, but have often intended to write to you.



The defeat on Lord Morpeth's Bill naturally made many persons expect the resignation of the Government. They justly thought that repeated proofs of the want of confidence evinced by the House of Commons ought, according to all constitutional maxims, to lead to a change of ministry. They recollected that Peel in 1835, had retired for no other reason than his constitutional respect for the effect of three or four adverse votes recorded by the House.

This feeling, although not followed up by the Government, has operated very injuriously to their credit. The ministers, however, resolved to try the effect of a large bidding for popularity, by announcing a great change in the commercial system of the country; and especially, by an alteration, or rather practical abolition, of the Corn Laws. This is now the grand matter of contest, and I cannot doubt that the Government will be beaten in the House of Commons.

The debate began yesterday, and will probably be continued on Monday and Tuesday. The results, I think, must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the Government; for if they should not retire, but endeavour to have recourse to other financial measures, it is probable that the House will agree to some motion equivalent to a vote of censure, by which their fall would be rendered more grievous. It is said by many, that a dissolution of Parliament will be attempted; but this I do not believe. There are formidable obstacles of a technical nature; and even if these could be overcome, I doubt if they would derive any advantage from the elections. The abolition of the "Bread Tax" would be a popular cry in many places; but it would be counteracted by others of equal efficiency. What may be the final result of such an appeal to the lower classes, especially in seasons of difficulty, is a very doubtful question.

Hitherto, it has always been resisted by the Government whatever may have been the opinions of its individual members; and it is not clear that an Agrarian Law, or any similar might not meet with success, when proposed under such authority.

Before I write to you again, the fate of the Government will be finally decided; and I can only now repeat, for the last time, that, as far as I am personally concerned, I look to the prospect of change with the most unmitigated dislike.

If we are doomed to return to office, what a complication of difficulties shall we encounter, and what a succession do they leave us. Foreign affairs, although sufficiently entangled, do not present the most gloomy part of the picture.

I trust that our relations with France have improved; and that the French Government is gradually acquiring strength. Without strength in these bad times it is difficult even to be honest.

Peel is full of energy, and I think quite prepared to encounter all the difficulties of office, should it be unavoidable; but no one will suspect him of being impatient for this consummation.

*Priory, May 23, 1841.*

MY DEAR PRINCESS,

You will, doubtless, be surprised that my letter is not dated in Downing St., and that the ministers are still in office.

After your last letter, you could not have thought it possible that, when defeated by a majority of thirty-six, in a question involving their whole financial system, they should have resisted such a judgment of the House of Commons. They now give us reason to expect that they will dissolve Parliament and attempt to improve their condition by the effect of

agitation and excitement produced by the cry of "cheap bread." Unless they had resolved to take this step, their present continuance in office is quite unaccountable, as they must be aware of their inability to carry a single measure without the permission of Peel and the Conservatives. But the step is a desperate one. It is doubtful if their condition will be at all improved. The success of the Anti-Corn Law cry has been hitherto very partial; and they are so much distrusted throughout the country that even those who approve of their measures, put no faith in the men.

I cannot say what may be the course to be pursued by Peel in the present week; but I imagine the Conservative party are so indignant, and so eager, that some decisive vote must be proposed immediately. Should this be carried, and the Government still resist, a crisis will have arrived which may prove fatal to the constitution, and to the monarchy. The days of impeachment are gone by. The worst that can now happen to a minister is the loss of his place. This has hitherto been supposed to be the consequence of the loss of the confidence of either House of Parliament; but the present Government, having shown their indifference to the support of the House of Lords, now seem disposed to exhibit the same contempt for a majority of the House of Commons. This brings the House to the employment of the last, and only effectual weapon in their hands—the stoppage of supplies. A fatal extremity. I dread to contemplate the result, and hope that it may be avoided. It would be most calamitous, and would be the opprobrium of representative government.

One thing is clear. Unless the present ministers dissolve Parliament, they cannot remain in office; and even if attempted, the remedy is extremely



doubtful. I cannot tell how the denouement is to be brought about, or what it is to be; but you will at once perceive the critical nature of our situation.

It is unprecedented; for the early difficulties of Mr. Pitt's official life offers no parallel. The Parliament was not of his own calling, and he knew that a dissolution would give him a great majority. He had the House of Lords with him. He had failed in none of his measures, and the opposition was entirely personal to himself, and to his appointment to office.

These people have "charmed lives," and, "if" they continue to scramble on, you know that personally, I should not be unhappy. But a new era in our constitutional history will have commenced.

*Haddo House, July 6, 1814.*

MY DEAR PRINCESS,

As Parliament is to meet on the 29th August, I am come here in order to enjoy the short holidays that are allowed us; for the distance from London is so great that it is very improbable I should be able to return in the autumn, after the close of the new Session. Indeed, it seems now certain that Peel must be in office; and if this should also be my fate, the pleasures of a country residence must be given up, as well as every other.

The Parliamentary returns have been curious. We have gained seats, of which we had no expectation, and have lost others we thought quite secure. On the whole, however, our majority will be considerable; I should think double the number at which you say it is estimated by Brougham. The dissolution of Parliament was a scandalous proceeding on the part of the Government; with the certain knowledge that they would be defeated; and with the sole object of crippling the administration of their successors. It

is an act of signal treachery to the Queen, who has been sacrificed for mere Party interest.

Our position in office will not be enviable; but we must meet our difficulties stoutly, and I think as we grapple with them they will be found to diminish. I am sanguine in the prospect of our Foreign Relations being improved, rather than otherwise, with all the world. Our course will be so plain and straightforward, so cordial and friendly with each, and so entirely without petty jealousies, or the influence of personal prejudices and passions, that it will be hard if we do not make ourselves respected by all.

*Foreign Office, Sep. 7, 1841.*

MY DEAR PRINCESS,

I had thought that almost my first letter from this place would have been addressed to you, but perhaps you will not be surprised that I should have been here for two or three days without writing.

At last then, the change has taken place. Peel has completed his Government, and we are installed in our respective offices. There is no use in further complaining; and I must be resigned to my fate, and submit. I do assure you, however, that my aversion is by no means diminished, and that it is with the utmost reluctance I now find myself in the same room I left more than ten years ago, under very different feelings.

There is only one consideration which makes me endure with some patience the labour and irksomeness of my position. I hope not to be personally unacceptable to the governments of Europe; and to be able to contribute in some small degree to the preservation of peace, and to the increase of a good understanding in all quarters.

I would give a great deal to pass three days with M. Guizot at this juncture. There are many subjects

that might be placed on such a footing as would almost infallibly lead to a happy result. But I cannot express to you the comfort and satisfaction I feel in having to deal with a man whom I am able thoroughly to respect. I would willingly believe that M. Guizot is not indisposed to confide in my honesty and good intention.

You know that I have never been a lover of what was called the French alliance, which always appeared to me to be an offensive display of exclusive connection, without any real sympathy or cordiality. I regard the mutual esteem entertained by Peel and M. Guizot as worth fifty alliances. He may depend on our policy being in unison with our professions. Difficulties, of course, we shall have, and various questions of conflicting interest; but if we are fully agreed in the main object we have in view, these will disappear. With the opinion I entertain of M. Guizot, the stability and efficiency of his administration must be sincerely desired by us; and we cannot suppose that he should entertain any other feeling with respect to us. We must therefore, by all proper means, mutually assist and support each other. . . .

You will desire to know something of our domestic position, with which there is every reason to be satisfied. The change has been effected, and the whole ministerial arrangements completed without the least excitement in any part of the publick. Everything has been done quietly; and everywhere with the conviction that it was inevitable. Our large majority gives us security in Parliament, and there is no reason at present to suppose that it is likely to suffer any diminution. . . .

We have more to fear from a bad harvest than from all the thunders of the most formidable opposition; and from this danger we are not yet quite secure.



## TO THE SAME

*Foreign Office, Oct. 19, 1841.*

Thank you for your last letter, and for your admirable answer to Lord John, a copy of which you enclosed. I think his account of the condition in which they have left this country, both at home and abroad, is equal to any specimen of impudence I have seen.

But great as our difficulties are, we shall I trust get over them all.

The affairs of Spain are likely to create a new complication if the movement in favour of Queen Christina should continue. My maxim is always to support existing governments with whom we are connected by friendly relations; and therefore, I hope that Espartero will put down the revolt. But, beyond this moral support, I have no wish to have anything further to do with the affair. It is for the Spaniards to decide what form of government, and what Prince they like best.

You must be quite aware of the universal belief which prevails here that the whole affair is a French contrivance. It requires all my confidence in the veracity of M. Guizot to think that this is not the case. I recollect that the same remonstrances were made in 1830, against French assistance being given to the enemies of King Ferdinand; although I believe they were at that time more the emissaries of M. de la Fayette than of the Government. I hope the contest may soon be over; for, if it continues, I see that many questions will arise between us, which had much better be avoided. . . .

I am very much pleased with Canning, whom I have made my under-secretary. He works very hard, has good sense, and cleverness; and altogether

is a great acquisition. But the business of this office has increased beyond measure since I was here before; and I know not how it is to be overcome. Palmerston made everybody write all day long; I rather discourage the propensity. We were near taking Bulwer from you; but much to my joy, he is returned to Paris.

TO THE SAME

*Nov. 26, 1841.*

The distress in various parts of the country is very severe; but it is quite wonderful with what patience it is endured. I really think in this respect that we far excel any people in Europe. Fortunately I have nothing to do with the Corn Laws; but this is a matter which will give plenty of trouble, and is one of the most difficult questions with which the Government will have to grapple.

The Queen is a wonderful person, and is quite as well and as strong as before her confinement. I was at Windsor last week for a couple of days, but I am so bad a courtier that I omitted to ask to see the Prince. I hear, however, that he is a remarkably fine child. He was so, at the moment of his birth, when I did see him.

## CHAPTER X

### PART II

#### MAINE AND OREGON (1842-1846)

“Men of intelligence and fairness, of elevated principle and large foresight, might settle the whole matter in two hours.

“Every good man in the United States would deprecate a war between us and England for such a subject as this Oregon dispute, as an act at once of stupendous folly and enormous crime.”

MR. WEBSTER.

*Washington, March, 1846.*

ON Lord Aberdeen going to the Foreign Office, he found the relations between England and the United States in a very critical condition. Perhaps here, more than anywhere else, Lord Aberdeen at the time got his way, and acted as a Peace Minister. One cause of peril was removed by the acquittal of McLeod, a British subject, who had been arrested and tried for murder on account of the share he had taken in the capture and destruction of the steamer “Caroline” during the Canadian Rebellion of 1838. Had he been executed it would have been impossible not to have resented such an act, and the two countries must have been very near war.

The irritation caused by this incident rendered the discussion of other matters more difficult. The long-standing dispute as to the North-east Boundary between the United States and the British Provinces might at any time, owing to a quarrel as between hunters and settlers on the spot, have brought the two nations into an attitude of hostility from which neither could recede.

For a short account of this complicated question, I am greatly indebted to Lt.-Colonel Dudley A. Mills, R.E., who has invested these boundary lines with a living interest, and made it apparent “why this



tract of barren pine swamp " required all the proved patience of Aberdeen.

Colonel Mills says of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, " the sincerity, the humanity, the humility, the perseverance of the dour Scot will be seen as factors in the well-being of the world, more powerful and more lasting than the jaunty humour, the biting wit, even the burning eloquence of more notorious politicians."

The Treaty which recognised the independence of the United States was signed in 1783. In it, the boundaries of the new nation were defined by a line which separated between the revolted Colonies and those which remained loyal to the British Crown. No map was attached, and the line was described in words. At the time that the Treaty was signed, the identity of a particular river, mentioned in it, was known to be uncertain. A Joint Commission in 1798 cleared up this uncertainty.

The description of the rest of the line, between New England (then within the United States) and the bordering Canadian provinces of Quebec and Nova Scotia, was quite clear to anyone consulting contemporary maps.

The Treaty line was inconvenient to Britain on strategic grounds. The ordinary road from Nova Scotia to Quebec passed through a piece of New England which had now become American territory. On the conclusion of the war of 1812-1814 between Britain and America, Britain tried to get the boundary revised. America agreed to delimitation, but refused revision.

From 1815 to 1842 Britain tried to twist the words of the Treaty, and to gain by dialectics what she had lost by war and diplomacy. The interest was mainly military, trade was very little concerned. The only people who had full access to the maps and documents were the experts. They were not unprejudiced judges. Military necessity, patriotism, the possession of well-paid jobs, all militated against an impartial award.

For twenty-five years the war of words continued,

and on one occasion nearly came to a war with more deadly weapons. Arbitration was tried and failed.

The Dutch award failed, as it was against the weight of evidence, and the United States refused to abide by the arbitrator's decision.

In the autumn of 1841 Aberdeen came into office. He was determined that, if he could prevent it, there should be no war over what he called a pine swamp. He was rewarded by a bloodless victory; within twelve months the Ashburton Treaty was signed at Washington, in August 1842.

Aberdeen believed in the claim of Britain, but America also believed in its claim. Both nations were sincerely convinced of the justice of their cause. The territory was of little value. War to Aberdeen's mind was out of the question, and the problem was how was a way out to be found. Arbitration, in the circumstances, could not be again tried. Compromise always came readily to the mind of Aberdeen, and he was determined to find a fitting Ambassador, and to see the question through on these lines.

The Duke of Wellington was the chief difficulty. The Maine dispute to him, unfortunately, presented itself on purely military and strategic lines.

Lord Aberdeen chose Alex. Baring, Lord Ashburton, as the plenipotentiary for this country. He sailed from England on board H.M.S. "Warspite" in February 1842. The voyage out, lasted nearly two months, the negotiations about four, and by the end of September Ashburton came home.

His instructions were contained in three separate despatches written by Aberdeen in the months of February, March, and May.

On February 8 Ashburton was told to get as much as he could of the total claim (about 12,000 square miles), but to secure, as a minimum, the area awarded by the arbitration (about 4,000 square miles).

Aberdeen sent Wellington a copy of the despatch, and the next day, February 9, Wellington replied with a private protest that Britain should stand firm on the whole claim. Aberdeen sent on to Ash-

burton Wellington's protest. Ashburton had already sailed, but owing to bad weather the "Warspite" had put back, and was anchored off Yarmouth. Ashburton received the protest, and replied at once that he would not be able to satisfy the Duke.

While Ashburton was sailing to Canada, a discussion as contrary to Aberdeen's nature as were the winds that kept back the "Warspite" was taking place at home.

The result of the two clashing points of view is embodied in the despatch of March 31. The earlier part adheres to the minimum of 4,000 square miles, as in the earlier despatch. Certain paragraphs follow evidently embodying Wellington's view, and the despatch ends by definitely increasing the minimum so as to cover the whole area north of the Saint John River.

Ashburton was not unnaturally furious at receiving these contrary instructions, and explained to Aberdeen that such a limitation of his powers would probably ruin his mission. He added that had he known such a reduction was in contemplation he would never have undertaken it. As the despatch was inconsistent, Ashburton asked for definite orders.

In the third despatch Aberdeen put matters straight. He asserted that the minimum intended had always been the arbitral area of 4,000 square miles, and explained the difficulty he had with Wellington, whose "tenacity," he said, Ashburton well knew.

This despatch made Ashburton happy, and he finally secured not only 4,000 square miles, but very nearly 1,000 miles extra, making in all 5,000 miles; a very good bargain for Great Britain.

Aberdeen's diplomacy had chiefly to be exercised on the Duke. He collected expert military opinions of a nature to convince him. He knew what he wanted—the arbitral area as a minimum. The Duke did not really understand the question, nor did he perhaps care to go very closely into it. He got the minimum increased, but not to the area he himself had



fixed on. It was not Aberdeen's way to write contradictory orders; long his despatches might be, but they were consistent. The March 31 despatch remains to this day, therefore, somewhat of a puzzle.

Aberdeen may have argued with himself that the Duke would not give way. If he resigned, Peel would receive a heavy blow, also Aberdeen's resignation would not help him. He saw he must yield, and he put in the paragraphs, but he did not alter his own part of the letter. Ashburton might succeed. Fortunately, Ashburton was moved to protest strongly, and the Duke probably yielded his military point.

Two stories are connected with the Maine and Oregon disputes. One, that a map highly favourable to the British claim was discovered when too late, safely kept under lock and key. Lord Aberdeen, when told of it, uttered the highly characteristic remark that had it been found sooner "we might have had a war, but we would have had no Treaty."

The other picturesque story has found a place in American text-books, but no trace of it, though sought for with care, can be found in the Aberdeen papers.

The story runs that one of Lord Aberdeen's sons, when exploring these rivers, tried for salmon, but failed to get any. He reported the waters as of no use, and like "the pine swamp," Lord Aberdeen dismissed the territory from his mind and thoughts. The documents found are of a drier nature than this unwritten legend, and they prove beyond doubt what Aberdeen said of this and of many another embryo controversy—"that one with a mind set on peace would emerge on that side, given goodwill on both sides."

#### LORD ABERDEEN TO MR. PAKENHAM

*Feb. 1846.*

The difficulty of our present situation, and our uncertainty respecting the real designs of the

American Government, together with the character of the proceedings of Congress, had made it a matter of prudence to prepare for the worst. I told him that no person more anxiously desired to avert war than myself—that, if ever there existed a Minister of Peace, I was that man; but with the appearances before me, it was quite impossible for me to refuse my assent to those measures of preparation which were considered indispensable, both in this country and in Canada.

The Oregon Boundary dispute was wholly different, not only in locality, but in kind, from that of Maine. The Maine dispute turned on the interpretation of a Treaty, and the area in question was of small intrinsic value. The Oregon dispute turned on the division between the two Powers of a large territory of great potential value, which, by a Convention in 1818, had been left as a No Man's Land, open to occupation by the subjects and citizens of either Power.

The area known till 1846 as the "Oregon Territory" lay between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. To the north of the latitude  $54^{\circ} 40'$  were the possessions of Russia, to the south of the latitude  $42^{\circ}$  those of Mexico. The Oregon Territory between these limits covered about 400,000 square miles. Until about 1840 hardly any American citizens had availed themselves of their rights under the Convention of 1818, and the territory had been occupied by the Hudson Bay Company as a fur preserve. The trading superintendents were a handful of Scotch Canadians—men of ability and enterprise—their assistants were mainly half-castes, and the Indians trapped the wild animals, exchanging the skins for stores provided by the Company.

Dr. McLaughlin, the chief superintendent from 1825 onwards, was a man of wisdom and power. Strong drink was discouraged, life and property were

safe, the shareholders of the company, the traders, and the hunters were contented, and, within the limits of space and time, the greatest happiness was reached by the greatest number. But such conditions could not last. Sooner or later immigrants must arrive, the fur trade would automatically cease, and settlers would take the place of traders.

Canning, in the 'twenties, had tried to make an arrangement. He had proposed that the River Columbia should be the boundary. The Americans had demanded all the area south of the 49th parallel. Canning would not agree, so the Convention of 1818 (which lapsed in 1828) was prolonged indefinitely, but made terminable by either party on giving a year's notice.

Such was the state of affairs when Aberdeen took office in 1841. Immigration into Oregon was just beginning, Congress was getting interested and American Empire-builders were subject to increasing attacks of a disease somewhat similar to the "Mer-vousness" from which British Empire-builders suffered in the 'eighties, when Russia expanded in Central Asia.

In 1842 Aberdeen instructed Ashburton to try to settle Oregon on the lines of Canning's proposals. Webster, with whom he negotiated, was at first favourable, but the increase of interest in Oregon, the return to Washington just at that moment of the Wilkes expedition of exploration on the Pacific coast, the precarious position of Webster himself, and finally the strenuous and delicate negotiations over the Maine Boundary, made a combination of difficulties so great that Webster and Ashburton were forced to postpone the settlement of Oregon till some more convenient opportunity.

Aberdeen writes to Mr. Croker:

"The members of Congress were about to disperse, the weather had become insufferably hot, and Ashburton was impatient to return home. This was the reason why nothing more was done at that time."



Webster retired in May 1843, and during the negotiations of the next three years Aberdeen had to deal successively with two Presidents (Tyler and Polk), corresponding to our Prime Ministers, and three Secretaries of State (Upshur, Calhoun, and Buchanan), corresponding to our Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs. During the critical period 1844-1846 the British representative in Washington was Sir Richard Pakenham, an honest and industrious diplomat of sober judgment, but not as able as Ashburton. In the Maine dispute, as above explained, Ashburton had helped Aberdeen out of a hole. In the Oregon dispute Pakenham helped to put him in one.

The general idea of Aberdeen was to make a compromise between the two divergent views in the abortive discussions some twenty years before. He was ready to offer rather more than Canning and wanted the Americans to meet him half-way. The more far-seeing American statesmen were in no hurry for a division of the territory. They were content to leave the matter to time. Until about 1840 the territory had been occupied by British fur-traders. But eventually settlers would immigrate, those settlers would be mainly Americans, fur-trading would cease, and the whole territory would tumble automatically into the ample American lap. Local conflicts might arise in the process, but the Americans, being much more numerous, would have the whip hand. Unfortunately for America, fortunately perhaps for Britain, this pleasing pan-American apple-cart was upset by the violence of American domestic politics. The slavery party wanted to annex Texas, the anti-slavery party objected. Westerners always wanted expansion. If the Oregon territory were acquired as free, it would balance the slavery of Texas. The leaders of all parties sat on fences and became for different reasons no longer "available" as presidential candidates. Thus at the Democratic Convention in 1844 James K. Polk, a comparatively unknown man, was chosen as Democratic candidate.

In November he was elected President and in March 1845 he assumed office.

Polk was simply a party man put into office to carry out the party programme. *Slavery* made divisions, but all parties could unite in *Expansion*.

For the Oregon question especially, there was a magnificent slogan, "Fifty-four Forty or Fight." This meant that America was to seize the whole Oregon territory up to the Russian boundary at 54° 40' latitude. Not a wrack was left behind for Britain. If Britain protested she was to be forcibly evicted.

In these circumstances the Government of Britain prepared for war. Aberdeen was naturally less war-like than Peel, but he seems to have entirely agreed that the territory north of the 49th parallel could not be given up. "We too, my lords," exclaimed Aberdeen, amid the cheers of the House, "have rights which are clear and unquestionable, and those rights, with the blessing of God and your support, we are fully prepared to maintain." The American policy was officially formulated in the inaugural speech of the President on March 5, 1845, but owing to the various hitches, hold-ups and stoppages incidental to political machinery, the definite notice to terminate (in a year's time) the Convention of Joint Occupancy was not given to Britain till April 1846.

Immediately on receipt of this notice Aberdeen acted. He forwarded to Washington a new draft convention by which the 49th parallel became the boundary to the sea, Vancouver Island entirely British, and the rights of navigation down the Columbia River were secured to British fur-traders. The President passed Aberdeen's draft to the Senate. The Senate approved and the draft verbatim as drawn up by Aberdeen became the Convention signed on June 12, 1846.

Two outside influences contributed to this successful termination of the dispute.

(1) The United States were on the verge of war with Mexico. Though Aberdeen was careful to take

no advantage of such condition, yet it must have had its influence in American councils.

(2) The Government of Sir Robert Peel was near its end. As soon as the Corn Laws were repealed the Whigs and the Conservatives were sure to combine, the one against their traditional opponent, the other against their still more hated friend. In that case the Whigs would return to power, Palmerston would succeed Aberdeen at the Foreign Office, and any effort towards Anglo-American friendship would be heavily handicapped. Aberdeen was not at all shy of working this influence, which must have been very great, especially with Americans anxious for a settlement.

A critic of Aberdeen may fairly ask, "Why could he not settle earlier? Surely the terms to which he agreed in 1846 might easily have been obtained in 1843, and all the 'Fifty-four Forty' fury might have been avoided." In considering this aspect of the matter it must be remembered that the American immigration into Oregon was only beginning about 1842. The British Fur Company were still in *de facto* occupation of the joint territory. Why should they be turned out because in future years American settlers might want to cultivate the land where the fur animals still bred and mustered? When the settlers came in quantities the traders would have to go. But why turn out the traders before the settlers came?

In 1845-1846 the scene in Oregon had entirely changed. American settlers were pouring into it in large numbers. The British were completely outnumbered. The Columbia River could not be held by force against them, and in any case the fur-trade could not last. So the time had come to change course, and, fortunately for Britain, Aberdeen was at the helm to steer the ship.

The news of the acceptance by America of Aberdeen's Convention reached London on the morning of the very day on which Peel announced to the House of Commons the resignation of his Government. No one



called it "Peace with honour!" It was better than that. It was a peace which contained no seeds of future wars.

The Queen wrote to her outgoing Foreign Minister expressing her "great delight at the news of the settlement of the Oregon question." "This is an immense thing for the peace of the world, reflects such credit on Lord Aberdeen; and it is such a very great satisfaction to us, that Lord Aberdeen should have settled this question, which he alone, she fully believes, could have done." The Queen went on to say "how deeply she deplores that Lord Aberdeen must leave her service; it is to the country, too, a serious loss. It is not only as a valuable Minister, but as a kind friend, that the Queen will ever have the greatest esteem and regard for Lord Aberdeen; and it is very painful for us to think that we shall no longer see him so frequently."

The Prince Consort wrote his congratulations on Lord Aberdeen having been allowed "to complete this work triumphantly."

To Mr. Everitt, in America, Aberdeen wrote a farewell from the Foreign Office. He said that after the Ministerial crisis the previous year it was evident to him that the Government must fall:

I told Sir Robert Peel I had no other desire than that our Government should last long enough for him to carry the Corn Bill and for me to settle Oregon.

It is delightful to think that there is now no question of difference remaining between our Governments, and that free scope may be given to the development of the immense commercial resources of both countries.

Reverting now to the main narrative, the following correspondence will help to form an elucidating commentary on the period dealt with above:

## LORD ABERDEEN TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Foreign Office, Dec. 21, 1841.*

The determination of the French Government to carry into effect such a great reduction of the army has been attended with the best possible effects here. I rejoice at it, not only because it affords an indisputable proof of the pacific policy of the Government; but I rejoice at it also, because it proves to me that M. Guizot is strong enough to do what he thinks right; and of course, that he expects to be supported in this policy by the Chamber. . . .

You know that by habit we are always more or less suspicious of France. And, in truth, they go to work in such a roundabout way that it is difficult for them to inspire confidence.

Most assuredly, there is no public man in Europe whom I should be more disposed personally to esteem and respect than M. Guizot; but he must follow more or less the system of his Government, and the habitual management of affairs, so that even of him we cannot feel perfectly certain.

The Spanish marriages were an ugly business, but it is now well over, and I have no wish whatever to recur to it, except as an example that notwithstanding M. Guizot's personal opinions and views, we cannot be certain of the conduct of the Government. I hope we shall agree about Greece; and I am glad to hear that you think there is no material difference between us. I am ready most willingly to sacrifice all the credit of what is called English Influence, and to follow in the course pointed out by France, provided the object be accomplished, and the policy pursued be honest and sincere. I am a little afraid of French agents in the East; ours may sometimes be violent, prejudiced, and mistaken; but

there is no intrigue, or double dealing about them. In fact, the greater part of the misunderstanding which may ever arise between our two Governments will be mainly owing to the misplaced zeal and officious activity of inferior agents.

We have yesterday signed our Slave Trade Treaty, which is a grand affair, and will be highly appreciated in this country. It leaves very little more to be done upon this subject by means of negociation.

#### LORD ABERDEEN TO MR. GURNEY

*F. O. Feb. 20, 42.*

I confess that I was not sorry to return to my treadmill. It is not without some satisfaction that I see the friends of peace throughout the world are well pleased that I should be here. The consternation at the prospect of my warlike successor appears to have been as great at Washington as at Paris or Vienna.

I believe after all that I ought to have belonged to your old sect of whom I saw a very pleasing specimen the other day in the person of your relative Joseph John Gurney. He gave me some observations upon the Oregon affair which had the merit of being in many respects practical as well as philanthropical. I am sanguine in believing that we shall succeed in preventing a war for a cause so preposterous and absurd as the possession of a few miles of pine swamp; but at the same time, peaceful as I am, we cannot afford to neglect consistency and honour, and the Americans will find me very obstinate where I feel that it is necessary to be firm.



## LORD ABERDEEN TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Foreign Office, March 25, 1842.*

MY DEAR PRINCESS,

I trust that all our interpellations are at an end for the present, and that nothing of any unpleasant description will occur. I believe that M. de St. Aulaire has been annoyed by this sort of skirmishing; but he had no reason to be so; for there has never been anything but the most friendly feeling towards him. He and I have been on the best possible terms, and I have no doubt that we shall thus continue.

One fact is, that the unaccountable rancour of the French Chamber is the cause of all the mischief which has arisen, or which may yet arise between the two countries. What is the meaning of all this? Look at the difference of our Parliament. You do not see, it is true, any violent professions of love and intimacy, but you never find that France is spoken of, by any party, without respect. As for the exhibition of hatred which continually appears in the French Chambers towards us, it would be quite impossible in any man who felt what was due to himself. I really think we have reason to be proud of the contrast.

This rancour has led to a great misfortune; for such I consider the non-ratification of the Quintuple Treaty. I know all the difficulties of M. Guizot, and I do not say that, in the face of them, he ought to have ventured to take such a step as to ratify the Treaty. Of that he must be the best judge. But it is not the less a misfortune. Be the cause what it may, the breach of an engagement must always be attended with the most serious consequences, especially in this country; and it will be difficult to restore

a feeling of confidence. It was this which gave importance to the affair of Algiers. I do not know that it could signify much to us whether the French chose to occupy themselves with the Arabs and Moors in Africa; but we felt that the assurances we had received, although not amounting to a Treaty had not been fulfilled. M. Guizot is too honest a man himself to feel that an injury of this kind will produce a greater effect than where material interests of greater consequence are concerned.

I shall look with anxiety to the time when the French Government can venture to ratify the Treaty, and recover their proper position in the eyes of all Europe.

I think we have little to complain of; and that with respect to concert in all parts of the world, we are now going on very well together. I hope Spain will give rise to no difficulty, and according to present appearances it will not. We desire to see Spain independent of France; not hostile, quite the contrary. The more friendship the better. But we do not wish to see the family compact renewed; nor can we assent to the declaration of M. Thiers "*la tutèle de l'Espagne nous appartient!*"

At Constantinople we appear to have no difference of opinion; and in Greece there is now a general agreement among the diplomatic agents. The conduct of that Government, however, will really require to be watched. King Otho seems to be almost incorrigible. The events in Syria are deplorable; and it is not easy to say how they are to end. The stupidity, corruption, and tyranny of the Turks are scarcely to be credited. Notwithstanding I have long ago withdrawn the few artillerymen we had in that country, for the purpose of repairing the Turkish fortresses, and although I did so before they had been of any use, it is still reported that the English

are about to take possession of Syria, and the Turks are made to believe it. I hope the French agent in Syria is honest; and I have no reason to think that he is not, but you must admit that this is a marvellous state of things.

We are triumphant in Parliament; and we shall carry our great financial measures with ease. Peel shows that he is really the minister of the country, and that his experience, talent, courage, and honesty deserve support. I wish with all my heart, that our friends on the other side of the water had a little of our strength.

#### TO THE SAME

*F. O., April 12, 1844.*

We are now engaged in a great measure of domestic policy, which by the footing on which we propose to place the College of Maynooth is little less than the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. You recollect the excitement against the Emancipation Act in 1829. The opposition to our present measure is quite as decided and as powerful. It will be carried, however, without any difficulty in Parliament, for it is not there that the strength of the opposition is to be found. There is no doubt that a very great majority of all classes out of the House are strongly opposed to the measure. We carried Emancipation in Parliament without much difficulty; but it left a root of bitterness amongst our friends, which was the real cause of our overthrow in 1830.

The same effect may perhaps be now produced, and should this be the case, it would afford me no cause of regret; for defeat, in maintaining a great principle of justice and liberality, cannot be regarded



with the same feelings as a miserable squabble about sugar and cotton. We are determined to persevere not only with this, but with similar measures for the advantage of Ireland.

### TO THE SAME

*Foreign Office, June 25, 1844.*

It would not have been possible for me to have made you comprehend how a Government, with a general majority of not less than a hundred, should be overthrown because we could not carry a duty of three or four shillings, more or less of a tax on sugar. Yet such was the case. If the House of Commons had not rescinded their former vote, it would have been scarcely possible for us to remain in office. The Queen behaved admirably during this crisis, as I had a good opportunity of observing, having dined at the Palace each day while it lasted. Great dignity and self-possession, but with much interest and kindness. It was really remarkable.

The visit of the Emperor of Russia was most successful. All ranks were equally charmed with him. He is, as you say, a remarkable man. He is not quite what I expected; but the impression is more favourable. He speaks well, and his speech causes conviction. But, in spite of his commanding appearance, and manner, and power, there is something about him which always inspired me with a sensation of melancholy. I believe it is the expression of his eye, which is very peculiar.<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1845, during the discussions on the Repeal of the Corn Laws in the Cabinet, several of Peel's colleagues who dissented from the idea,

<sup>1</sup> His eyes were splendid, vigilant and watchful without being restless or unsettled. There was, indeed, no expression of sympathy or benevolence in his face.—*Autobiography George Duke of Argyll.*

turned to Lord Aberdeen for support. He astonished the dissentients by at once saying that he had long considered the Corn Laws logically indefensible, and had only supported them because he supposed their abolition impossible. He was followed in this by Graham and Sidney Herbert, but Lord Aberdeen was the first to give assent to Peel's proposal. He spoke also, to the surprise of many there, strongly for their Repeal in the House of Lords.

### TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*June 26, 1846.*

The crisis which I lately informed you was approaching is now revived, and in consequence of the rejection last night of the Irish Coercion Bill by the House of Commons, we shall to-morrow offer our resignations to the Queen.

I have seen for some time past that this result was inevitable; but it has taken place rather sooner than I expected. The Whigs, I suppose, were too impatient to wait; and it happens singularly enough, that the day of our great triumph is also that of our overthrow; for the Corn Bill passed the House of Lords last night.

The situation of the new Government will not be brilliant, for their existence must depend on our support. I greatly fear that for some time to come, any Government, be it composed of whom it may, must be weak in Parliament; which is always a serious misfortune for the country.

I do not deny that I leave with regret the management of great affairs, and the transaction of business with those whom I personally like and esteem; but above all, I regret the interruption of that policy, founded upon mutual confidence and regard, and upon which I have so cordially acted with M. Guizot for several years past.

## PRINCESS LIEVEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

1 *Juillet* 1846.

Je suis pleine de tristesse et en même temps d'orgueil pour vous. Jamais ministre n'a quitté les affaires sous des auspices plus magnifiques, plus glorieux,—tué le jour de la plus grande victoire, annonçant sa retraite le jour où il annonce un autre triomphe en Amérique. A l'intérieur, à l'extérieur, les plus grands succès. C'est dramatique; c'est superbe, mais je recommence;—c'est triste.

In a long affectionate letter M. Guizot said :

J'ai la confiance que bien souvent encore, n'importe dans quelle situation, nous servirons ensemble la bonne et rare politique que nous avons fait triompher pendant cinq ans.



## CHAPTER XI

### PART I

(1837-1850)

“How various his employments,  
Whom the world calls idle; and who perchance  
May deem that busy world an idler too.”

ON the death of King William, Parliament was dissolved, and Lord Aberdeen wrote to his son. The letter gives a picture of what was in the minds of Statesmen, when “the child of eighteen” ascended the throne. That she should have no mind of her own, was a not unnatural forecast, but one which showed little vision of the epoch opening before “our good Aberdeen,” who was to form one of that galaxy of great Ministers who stood around the Throne. Unstinted was the loyal devotion he was to show, in the dark days which were before him. Queen and country first took him far along a road he was most unwilling to tread, and “the will of her own,” was to be proved again and again.

*Argyll House, July 1, 1837.*

MY DEAREST GEORGE,

The death of the King has put an end to the session of Parliament; and we shall all be very soon leaving London in all directions.

It is impossible to say what sort of a Parliament the new one is likely to be; but the Conservatives are sanguine. In the meantime the control over the Queen possessed by the Ministers is, of course most absolute; as it would be impossible to suppose that a child of eighteen should know anything herself, or even have any will of her own. I hope her health

may continue, and that it may not be affected by the state of excitement and fatigue which must be produced by the change of her condition.

The Duke of Cumberland is gone to take possession of his kingdom of Hanover, which is now entirely separated from the Crown of England.

LORD ABERDEEN TO MR. GURNEY

*Sept. 20, 1837.*

I take your general view of France to be sufficiently correct. Great ease among the people and magnificence in the Government, but no wealth apparent in the expenditure of individuals. The country, however, is most prosperous, and Louis Philippe well deserves admiration. If his new chamber of deputies should be such as he has every reason to expect, he will act in a still more conservative sense than he has hitherto ventured to do and will deserve our admiration still more. As it is he has been the means of checking the mad mischief-making propensities of our own Government. I think the result of our elections is just what I would wish. We were strong enough before to prevent much legislative evil. We can now not only do this, but perhaps compel the Government to do some good into the bargain. But I most sincerely deprecate the notion of turning them out of office. With their factious and unprincipled opposition we should be a miserably weak Government and it is infinitely better that we should govern by their means, and that they should stick to their places until they become so degraded that the country will tolerate them no longer. Having myself not the least desire of office, I do not care how long this may last, but I am sure even for them who feel differently, and as party policy, it is the wisest course to pursue.

We have had a delightful month of August, the finest I ever remember in Scotland, which I have greatly enjoyed. Shooting, otter hunting and other rational sports and pastimes have given me plenty of occupation.

On Sir Robert Peel failing to form a Government due to the dispute about the Ladies of the Bedchamber he wrote to Mr. Hope :

*May 15, 1839.*

As our "crisis" is now at an end, I am restored to my usual command of time. The Public mind, with you in the north, will have been variously affected by the late events; and I am anxious to see what will be the final and durable impression. It is difficult to suppose that any persons, who can read and understand Peel's letter, should not decidedly approve of his conduct. But, when I recollect the monstrous infatuation which prevailed throughout the country on the subject of Queen Caroline; and that a cry was successfully raised in favour of the most bare-faced profligacy, merely by the persevering impudence of those who set it on foot, I confess that I am not very sanguine about the prevalence of the plainest truth with our thinking people.

I think it fortunate that Peel's attempt to form a Government came to an end at the time, and in the manner we have seen; for I can have little doubt that the same result would have been produced by similar causes at some future day. It is better that the intrigue should have been successful in the first instance, than that it should have overtaken us when fairly engaged in the administration of the country.

Personally, I am well pleased; for I really greatly prefer my present freedom to the slavery and responsibility of any office whatever.



## TO MR. HOPE

Jan. 5, 40.

I see you are thinking of war and of course anticipating a *smash*. Now I cannot think we shall have any war with France. It is possible than our F.O. may have mismanaged the affair and have affronted the French Government, but France has really no case. There is nothing whatever to justify a war and accordingly, notwithstanding all the bluster and preparations of M. Thiers, I do not find that any Government in Europe believes him to be in earnest. At all events, although the King may appear to fall in with the popular frenzy, I can never believe that he will permit matters to be driven to extremity.

I do not know in what manner Lord Palmerston has justly incurred blame, although this may possibly be the case from the levity and arrogance of his proceedings, but I must say that the objects of our Government appear to be good and as at present informed I have no fault to find. We shall know hereafter in what manner the business has been misconducted, and whether he might not have attained his object without producing this alarm through Europe.

We talk glibly enough of war or no war, but it is a dreadful alternative, and it is difficult to conceive any cause sufficient to justify us in bringing such a calamity upon the world. For once I do not protest and cry out against your political speculations. It would not frighten me out of my wits if the Russians were to occupy Constantinople to-morrow.

Lord Aberdeen approved of the Whig policy in regard to Egypt and Syria. He wrote to Princess Lieven, supporting France.

I have always told you that my reliance is on the wisdom of the King. It is impossible that he should permit the personal feelings of M. Thiers, or the national vanity of his people to precipitate him into a position so dangerous to the existence of his dynasty as a war with the Great Powers of Europe, and for no real French objects or essential interests. This is quite incredible. If the four Powers are united they have nothing to fear from the ill-humour of France in a question of this kind, nor is there any danger of the French people undertaking a crusade against all Europe in support of such a barbarian as the Pasha of Egypt. It would be little more rational than the attempt of that hopeful Prince Louis Bonaparte to conquer France by a handful of vagabonds from an European steam vessel.

TO THE SAME

*Aug. 31, 1840.*

Approving as I do of the objects professed by our Government, and of the means taken to secure them, I hope there have been no personal grounds of resentment offered by our Foreign Office. We know very well they can be uncivil enough in that quarter when they please, but I should greatly lament if such important interests should be endangered by petty personalities of this description.

Shortly after the resignation of the Peel Government Lord Aberdeen went down to Haddo, and there remained till recalled to London by the reassembling of Parliament in February 1847. The six following years he also spent in Scotland the whole period between the close of one session and the commencement of the next, and this part of the year was certainly that which he passed most agreeably to himself. His habits were as regular and methodical as his tastes were simple. Rising early, he invariably

took a short walk, accompanied by one of his sons, before meeting his family and guests at breakfast, from which meal, however large the party, the attendance of servants was rigorously excluded, as it was also from luncheon. After breakfast he wrote his letters till the post left at 11.30. He then saw his bailiff, who presented him with a "Daily State" of the labourers employed on the whole estate, often exceeding one hundred in number. A report of the works in progress was made, and his orders for the day were given.

As twelve struck he descended the broad flight of steps which led from the drawing-room to the terrace beneath. The head gardener, who awaited him there, accompanied him round the terrace and garden. He then turned into the long walk leading to the lake. Here the head forester met him. Together they went every day through some portion of the plantations, the condition of the woods new and old was examined, new walks were planned, and other improvements discussed.

On Saturdays this routine was varied. On that morning at noon Lord Aberdeen appeared on the opposite side of the house, where a similar flight of steps led down to the main entrance. There he received all who wished to speak to him on business, to complain of any grievance, to ask advice, or to give information. He spoke to each tenant and cottar separately, and took notes of their complaints or wishes. Lord Stanmore says :

This species of sitting in the gate, a survival, I presume, of the days of the heritable administration of justice, was not uncommon among great Scottish landlords in the eighteenth century. The Duchess Countess of Sutherland, and Lord Aberdeen, were the last to practise it.

It must be remembered that, at that time, the burdens and duties which fell upon a proprietor of



great estates in Scotland were, and still are, much greater than those that fall on an English landlord. Almost all public works, the making of roads, the building of bridges, the erection and maintenance of churches, schools and manses, and the relief of the poor were determined on by the "heritors" of the parish, and executed at their expense. But when a single man was, as was often the case, "sole heritor" in many parishes, the whole power of determination lay with him, and the whole burden of cost fell on him. He had therefore great power and great responsibility, and became the referee and arbiter of many matters which would in England have been settled by local authorities.

These Saturday morning levées were therefore never without attendants, but on the first Saturday after Lord Aberdeen's return from England there was always a specially large assembly; and to the demand on what business they came, the reply that they had no business, but wished to see his face again, was not uncommon. The custom had its value, but for some years before his death Lord Aberdeen abandoned it; partly to avoid fatigue, but chiefly as being no longer necessary, and inconsistent with modern usages.

Lord Aberdeen's favourite amusement in the afternoons was driving himself in a light pony carriage. His fast-trotting ponies carried him over a great extent of ground in a very short time, and he was thus enabled to visit works in progress at a considerable distance.

On Sundays he attended the parish church. There was but one service, at midday, in consideration of the great distance from which many of the congregation came. A long array of vehicles conveyed the whole household, servants and master, from the house to the church, and as the huge lumbering old coach, holding six inside, with which the procession closed, was seen to round a certain corner on the road, the minister, in his gown and bands, emerged from the back door of the "manse," and crossed the village

green to the church; *round* and not *in* which, according to immemorial custom, the congregation, whatever the weather, were assembled. Lord Aberdeen and his family climbed the steep flight of rough stone steps, external to the building, which led to their seat, and the congregation poured into the church; while the minister, sidling with difficulty past the old women, arrayed in red or crottal cloaks and high stiff white "mutches," who by right of deafness sat upon the pulpit stairs, made his way to that eminence, hung up his hat on a peg therein, and proceeded to read the metrical psalm with which the service commenced, and which was sung sitting. The roar of many hundred voices, every one of which joined in contributing to the volume of sound, unaccompanied by any instrument, was solemn and imposing. At the close of the service, the minister, after pronouncing with extended arms the final blessing, turned to the "loft" in which "my lord" was seated, and made a low bow, which was returned with equal gravity and depth of obeisance by his lordship, standing.

In the afternoon a walk was taken by the whole family and guests to the top of the hill in the deer park, round the lakes, and to the kitchen garden. After dinner, the day was concluded by the assembly of the whole household in the library for prayers. These consisted of a series of prayers written by Lord Aberdeen himself, and of great beauty.

The Countess Dowager Aberdeen, looking back on the life at Haddo, says :

There was a formality and stiffness which even then struck most strangers, and would now do so still more, and which gave rather the impression of a little court, with a somewhat rigid etiquette. The Admirals [his brothers] read their papers in the ante-room, the younger ones talked in an undertone in a corner, while the rest of us either conversed inaudibly, or waited in silence for his lordship to begin before we spoke to him.

The very name by which he was called, even by those who loved him best, showed something of this formality. But, even at this date, the formality was felt to be a survival, and the younger members of the family used to remark, with a certain flippancy, that it only needed a guard of halberdiers to make the Sunday walk an exact counterpart of the Duc de Sully's family promenades.

"I have thought it worth while to be thus minute in my account of the habits of life followed by Lord Aberdeen at home," says Lord Stanmore, "because the style of life, in its mingled simplicity and stateliness, has now wholly disappeared."

That is still more true to-day than when it was written, but in a day when "the landlord class" has almost disappeared, it is well once again to recall what the land has and ever will owe to them.

In 1840 Lord Aberdeen built a small house at Buchan Ness, a promontory on the coast, and the most eastern point of Scotland. The house stands on the extreme edge of the cliff, and looks straight down on the tumbling waves of the North Sea. It is about twenty miles from Haddo, in scenery as different as possible from the landscape which Lord Aberdeen had done so much to create there. The house resembles a small fortress rather than a seaside villa. Its granite girth seems part of the great "stacks" or cliffs on which it is built, and the wildest tempest that ever struck that stark district would make no appreciable difference in its defence against the elements. The landward side is now seamed by quarries, and a light railway destroys the amenities. The land is bare of all trees, and an endless procession of stone-dyed fields separates it from the more cultivated regions.

Lord Aberdeen delighted to go there for a few days at a time. His letters are full of it, and it was ever a refreshment to him. Here he raises a flagstaff to salute the Queen as her yacht takes her to Aberdeen, en route for Balmoral. He forbears to erect a battery



for her further edification. There is a short "quarter-deck" walk from whence he loved to watch the herring fleet setting sail. He records how he saw three hundred boats from Peterhead and forty-eight from his own village of Boddam set out to sea, "a very beautiful sight, as they all passed close under the house."

The ruddy cliffs glowing in the westering sun, the wide expanse of sea and sky, above all when the great storms hurled their waves at the base of his sea-girt eyrie, all possessed a strong fascination for him. In 1848, in a survey of the good crops, he adds: "I hear rumours of a potato disease which has not yet made much progress." He gravely remarks that he cannot attempt to grow vegetables; but he showed what could be done with a flower garden. He turned one of the numerous deep ravines which run up the coast into a rock garden. Shelter was obtained by the high cliffs, and at the bottom, a "stack" of bright red granite divided it from the sea. Here he planned beds of such flowers as would survive the situation, and when the numerous terraces of rock felt the glow of the summer days, the many-coloured flowers spread along the terraces were singularly lovely against the deep blue of the North Sea.

The neighbouring village, with its fishing population, Scandinavian in descent, picturesque in appearance and old-world customs, had a special attraction for Lord Aberdeen. Under his care the village lost much of the gaunt untidiness of Scottish townships, and became a model of neatness and cleanliness—"virtues not often cultivated in Scotch fishing villages," a comment which cannot be called untrue in a later age. The women spent much of their time watching the outgoing and incoming of the fishing fleet. For their accommodation Lord Aberdeen had granite seats erected in convenient and sheltered outlooks, and nothing pleased him better than to see these well occupied. He corresponded with Admiral Hamilton on getting a large barometer, which, inserted under glass, in a granite rock, would serve as

a warning to the fishermen. To it the Boddam herring fleet more than once owed its escape from dangers which proved fatal to boats belonging to other villages not possessed of the like advantage.

In 1845 Queen Victoria offered him the Ranger's House at Blackheath. Prince Albert wrote :

After your having declined to take Bagshot, we are much afraid to appear to press a house upon you, the fear of which has hitherto deterred us from making a proposal. I am now desired by the Queen to make you the offer of the Rangership of Blackheath [*i. e.*, Greenwich Park] with the house belonging to it, as a testimony of the Queen's regard and esteem for you.

Lord Aberdeen answered :

The house at Blackheath, is precisely the sort of residence which, in England, I should most desire to occupy; and with the Rangership of the Park it becomes doubly agreeable. The chief value in my eyes is in the evidence it affords of Her Majesty's special grace and favour. In truth, Sir, it would be no easy matter for me, were I to attempt it, to express all that I feel on the present occasion.

Blackheath was a great haven of rest to him in the coming years. He established the Haddos in it, and they were near at hand in the days when London was to hold him long years away from his northern home.

#### TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

Jan. 21, 1847.

It is strange that on my last appearance in the House of Lords, having announced the settlement of the Oregon question, I having left England on terms of friendship with all mankind, that I should find on my return to London that our Government has

protested formally against the conduct of all the four great powers of the Continent.

The French dispute however will not last long: the cause is really much too insignificant. A little vanity of authorship and personal feelings may protract it but the good sense of the country must prevail.

I have been fortunate in the manner of leaving office and the time of doing so and neither have, nor conceive it possible ever to have, the least desire to resume it.

Parties are strangely dislocated. Peel not only wishes to remain out of office but is absolutely determined to do so under all circumstances. The Government are weak and timid, but will stagger along with the support they will receive from all quarters and from the absence of any organised opposition.

Stanley has come forward prominently and must have serious views of being at the head of the Government, although they may perhaps be distant. I think it is not improbable that we may some time or other find ourselves under a Government formed by him. I hope that he may have sufficient ballast for the work. It is impossible not to like him, but he has some queer companions.

The French Revolution of 1848 affected Lord Aberdeen in a double sense. He had supported Louis Philippe and been in accord with Guizot's policy, and he had hoped for a settled Government in France. After seventeen years of peace, the King of France fell suddenly and completely, and the Guizot Ministry was impeached in the Chamber. Guizot was unpopular, and, realising that, he resigned, and all power passed out of his hands.

On reaching England, M. Guizot and his whole family were pressed to take up their residence at



Argyll House, but for many reasons he preferred a house of his own. Guizot, however, saw Lord Aberdeen almost every day, and their friendship became more than ever close and intimate. "Amongst all the public men whom I have known, M. Guizot is equalled by none in ability, and surpassed by none in integrity." This was high praise from Aberdeen, but he felt every word of what he said of the fallen French statesman.

## CHAPTER XI

### PART II

(1850–1853)

“ Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head to-day?  
And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.”

THE death of Sir Robert Peel was felt acutely by Lord Aberdeen, though he did not then foresee all the consequences that the event involved for him.

Seldom have two men been in more absolute accord than were Peel and Aberdeen. The great reforms with which Peel's name must for ever be associated, were to Aberdeen works of justice, and hence of necessity. He had no such doubts as surrounded the Duke of Wellington on the Corn Laws. Speaking at an agricultural dinner given in Aberdeenshire, he said to the angry and unhappy farmers around him that the Government were engaged working out a momentous problem, “ the Repeal of the Corn Laws, of the success of which he entertained no doubt whatever.” This was the belief that was in him. The speech involved him in a correspondence with one of the Aberdeenshire gentlemen. Aberdeen called Peel to his help for the needed arguments, but he himself stood his ground. Graham writes to him of this dinner, that such was the respect he was held, in “ even the Free Church,” quite as violent a body as those who supported the Corn Laws, were glad to see him at that gathering of agriculturists.

His own letters were full of his private sorrow and the public loss. He wrote to Lady Haddo:

When I recollect that his last speech in Parliament, only the day before, was made in my defence and that it was accompanied with unusual terms of affection and regard, the bitterness of grief is not unmingled with some sensations of pleasure. I think I have never known such universal regret amongst all ranks. It is a tribute to spotless integrity and unrivalled talent. A great light is gone out of the land; and we must endure the loss as best we can.

But what shall we say for that poor broken-hearted woman who remains !

To Guizot he wrote after attending the funeral :

It was indeed a sad ceremony; and to witness the change in that happy residence, in which I had experienced so much friendship, and had seen so much wisdom, prudence, and integrity of character, required more philosophy than I possessed.

The publick feeling is very remarkable. I well recollect the death of Mr. Pitt. On that occasion there was a general impression that the country had become less secure, and that we had been deprived of our chief means of protection and defence; but the spirit of party was by no means extinguished.

At present there is perfect unanimity, and all appear to feel that they have lost the man from whose exertions, whether in office or out of office, they had reason to expect the most practical good.

His last speech was most important. It was made reluctantly, and he greatly dreaded the defeat of the Government. From his previous silence, had it not been delivered, the Government would have believed that he approved of their foreign as well as their domestick policy.

His manifest reluctance, and the moderation of his manner, rendered his censure most effective.



I cannot say yet in what manner this calamity may affect the condition of parties. The loss to the Government will certainly be very great; but I do not see any probability of the reunion of the Conservative party. There is really no difference of opinion except in matters connected with free trade and protection; but this seems to be as decided and as irreconcilable as ever. A more kindly feeling, however, exists in consequence of our recent co-operation both in the Lords and Commons.

#### TO THE SAME

*Aug. 5, 1850.*

I have still no distinct view of the manner in which parties will be permanently affected by this deplorable loss.

With more friendly personal feelings towards each other, I see no real approximation in the different sections of the Conservative body.

Many look to me as the means of effecting this union, from my good-will towards all, and the absence of any extreme opinions on those subjects by which they are divided; but the difficulty would be enormous, and probably insurmountable.

I must confess, also, that although by no means insensible to the blessedness of the peace-makers, I feel no great disposition for a work requiring so much exertion, and the result of which is so doubtful. Our ministers have recently been roughly handled both by friends and enemies. Indeed, their position is pitiable enough; and in spite of the difficulty of finding anyone to replace them, it seems to be generally thought that their existence cannot be much prolonged.

At any other time they could not have stood for an hour; but under present circumstances I will not undertake to say what may be their fate.

He might not undertake to foretell their fate, but the fact must have slowly forced itself on his mind that he had now become the head of the Peelite party.

Small though it was, it owed its continued existence to the bonds of similarity of opinion and of conscientious principle.

In the winter of 1850, without any previous communication or knowledge of each other's sentiments, Aberdeen, Graham, Newcastle, Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert each came independently to the conclusion that the line taken by Lord John Russell on Papal aggression, though supported by the vast majority of the nation, was one inconsistent with the true principles of religious liberty, and must at whatever cost be firmly opposed, even though it involved breaking with a Government with which on the whole they were in sympathy.

Aberdeen had just come through a similar storm in his own country, and he knew well how useless it would be to stem the tide of popular frenzy. But forlorn hopes for peace and justice he always undertook, and better equipped than some of his followers, for none could think the Scottish Presbyterian could have anything that was akin to Rome, he girded himself for the fray.

#### TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Feb.* 1851. Having been all my life the friend of toleration, and of religious liberty, I cannot now act the part of a bigot, and persecutor.

#### TO THE SAME

*Feb.* 1851. We have commenced our session, and shall hear but little, for some time, except of Papal Aggression. Lord John is to bring forward his Bill in the House of Commons. According to general opinion, it will be ridiculously defective and inefficient; but weak as it may be, it is too strong for me, as I

cannot conceive the necessity for any law at all upon the subject.

But this is not the opinion of the Protectionists and Conservatives, who together with the country are quite mad.

The Act has long been repealed, and from the first Aberdeen told them it would be a dead letter. The only use it has in this or in any other history is to prove to those who would tamper with Rome that the heart of the nation is sound, and that the Reformed principles hold it in a clasp which may be unreasoning and unreasonable, but must be held among those things that Englishmen feel as part of their very freedom and life.

He had written to Gladstone during the Disruption controversy that he had never thought it necessary to renounce the religious persuasions of his ancestors, "though there is much in the Southern Church which I greatly prefer and to which I readily conform."

An attitude to which Gladstone would never conform; but Aberdeen, thus equipped, made one of his greatest speeches in opposition to the second reading of the Ecclesiastical Titles Assumption Bill. His opening was characteristic: "he merely desired to be considered as giving vent to the dictates of his own conscience, and expressing his deep conviction of what was due to the cause of truth and justice."

He had always believed that the great Act of Catholic relief was carried in opposition to a numerical majority of the people. That was his opinion at the time, and he had been confirmed by the demonstration of feeling which had lately taken place. In as far as it denoted a sound feeling for Protestantism, he rejoiced in it, and he thought that strong feeling in the nation was a better preservative of the Reformed religion against any aggression than such "a wretched piece of legislation" as that which now lay on the Table of the House. The Bill was the first retrograde step in the path of intolerance after twenty years of pursuing the path of toleration.



He then dwelt, to him a familiar ground, on the spiritual rights of the Church Catholic. The creation of Bishops was a purely spiritual act, though "here" they were accustomed to connect with the Episcopal character temporal rights.

After a sustained argument, he came to the crux of the Bill, whether the supremacy of the Crown had been violated, and contempt thrown on its rightful prerogative. "If he thought that was in peril there were few men in your Lordship's house who would more readily respond to the call than himself, but he believed it to be a mere chimera." They could not expect the Pope to acknowledge the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Queen; they might as well expect him to approve of the Reformation.

He thought he "need not inform" their lordships that the spiritual supremacy of the Queen was utterly rejected by the Church and people of Scotland, and by the Episcopal Church in Scotland. The Queen, however, must have seen that those who denied her spiritual supremacy were among her most loyal, devoted, and attached subjects. He drew his strongest illustration from that Church in Scotland. There he was on surer ground as to the intelligent appreciation of the Peers.

The Episcopal Communion in Scotland acted without the slightest reference to the authority of the Queen and Government. A respectable gentleman in his parsonage in Essex very recently found himself made a Bishop and translated to the See of Moray and Ross. A few years ago a new See, the Bishopric of Argyll and the Isles, was founded, established, and endowed by the liberality of a prelate of that Church. Let not their lordships forget that prelacy was abolished in Scotland—nay, it was prohibited in terms ten times more severe than any of their laws against the Roman Catholics.

The Government had inserted a clause, to which he gave entire concurrence, saying the Act did not extend or apply to any bishop of the Protestant

Episcopal Church in Scotland. He only wished the clause had been extended to embrace the Catholics ! He would recognise them in the same manner as the Scottish Episcopal Bishops were recognised. He saw no difference between the cases. They should be recognised, but the recognition would give them no legal right or authority, save over their own flocks, and that with their consent. The Episcopal Church in Scotland he held in high esteem and veneration. Its prelates were known to him in their order and ministry. He thought they had all the rights due to them, and he wished for our fellow Christians the Roman Catholics the same position.

His protest, signed only by twelve peers, and his speech were unavailing. The Bill passed amid the shouts of a religious panic, always the most cruel and cowardly of all vain imaginations. Those who opposed the measure met with the full meed of public obloquy. It drew him closer to the little band of Peelites with whom he could work.

Early in 1851 Lord John Russell sought his help and that of Graham in the formation of a Government from which Palmerston would have been excluded.

Both Aberdeen and Graham declared negotiations were impossible unless the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was withdrawn.

This could not be done. Lord John had pledged himself too deeply. Lord Aberdeen would have agreed to the measure which repudiated the arrogant offensiveness of the Pope's action, but he was resolute in opposing all penal clauses ; and, agreement being impossible, the negotiations dropped. The Queen then asked Lord Aberdeen if he were willing to form a Government.

He knew the determination of the people to have the Bill, and as he conscientiously disapproved, he declined to attempt a task which circumstances would have rendered futile.

The temptation was great, and the isolation of the Peelite party would have been terminated, in itself

a great gain, but Aberdeen wrote to Princess Lieven :

After the resignation of Lord John and his whole Cabinet the Queen sent for Stanley, who told her that he was not prepared to undertake the formation of a Government; but that if other combinations were attempted and should fail, he would then endeavour to perform the task rather than leave the Queen without a Government. The Queen sent for Lord John, and for myself and Graham. The next day convinced Graham and myself that we could not conscientiously agree to the "No Popery" measure proposed by Lord John, and he gave up the commission.

The next morning the Queen sent again for Stanley, and he is now engaged to form a Government. His prospect of success is gloomy enough. Canning has refused the Foreign Office, and Gladstone has declined to enter his Cabinet.

To Arthur Gordon he wrote :

I might have been Prime Minister at this moment, had it not been for my resistance to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Without doubt this is a most unpopular ground; but I feel quite satisfied that I am right. Stanley came to me direct from the Queen, and endeavoured to persuade me to be her Foreign Secretary. He went from me to Canning, with the same proposal. Having failed with him and Gladstone, he never had a chance of forming a Government.

At the end of the session, Lord Aberdeen left London one of the most unpopular of men. He had once written : "We are in the midst of our corn and our Catholics," and for the time these two subjects had made him out of touch with his countrymen north and south. He himself was under the belief



that by the attitude he had assumed he had excluded himself from office for the rest of his life.

Perhaps the sacrifice for him was a light one. In 1846, he wrote :

We shall, I hope and believe, carry the Corn Bill through the House of Lords. We shall have made a sacrifice for the sake of a great measure, which no one else could ever have carried.

Invective he did not greatly fear, he said, and he continued :

I see that I have been unmercifully abused at a Free Church meeting in Edinburgh, especially by Dr. Candlish. This was to be expected, and cannot be helped; but the exhibition of rancour, bigotry, and intolerance was deplorable. I am not sure that I should not prefer Pope Pius to Pope Candlish; he is a sort of Pope, though in a Geneva gown.

The year 1851 also contained the episode of the publication of Mr. Gladstone's letters respecting the condition of the political prisoners at Naples. When he returned to England from his visit to Naples, Gladstone was so stirred and moved by the horrors of King Bomba's Government that he told Lord Aberdeen he meant to bring the matter before Parliament.

Aberdeen dissuaded him from doing this, until he had used his influence with the Neapolitan Government. Gladstone was to remain silent, and Aberdeen was to try the slow way of diplomatic pourparlers. Gladstone, under less provocation, could not easily restrain himself, and of course broke forth in the vehement pamphlets which helped the cause of revolution in Italy, though it did not by any means lessen the sufferings of the Italian patriots. Lord Aberdeen refrained from any expression of displeasure :

I have certainly much reason to complain of Gladstone; but he is so honest and so perfectly sincere,

and we are both personally and politically connected so closely, that although I have not concealed my feelings from him it is impossible for me to entertain any resentment.

As an old friend of the Austrian Government, and a sincere believer in all that the Treaty of Vienna had laid down, Aberdeen had tried his best, and again failed. He had no vision of a United Italy. Gladstone had, and the younger statesman was to be justified.

But the fall of Palmerston was at hand, and those who trembled for the safety of the Ark of our foreign relations were to be relieved from what had proved an intolerable burden of suspense to the band of Peelites—few in number, but ever bonded together by the dangers of the time.

With Palmerston gone, there was nothing to separate Aberdeen and Russell. The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill had already passed into oblivion, "the supremacy of the Crown" had faded from the fickle recollections of the people, and with kindred ecclesiastical war cries in Scotland was dying out, spent with its own fury.

Lord Aberdeen regretted when Lord John made no amalgamation with the Peelites, and refused office at the beginning of 1852. To Princess Lieven he wrote :

*March 5, 1852.*

I hope Peel's friends will for the most part act together. His Government I believe to have been the most practically liberal we have ever seen in this country. I feel certain that a Government of progress in these times is indispensable. None can be too liberal for me, provided it does not abandon its conservative character.

A short period of Conservative Government was necessary both for the weakened Whigs and for the Conservatives.

Palmerston defeated Lord John on a motion with respect to the Militia, and thus Palmerston had his tit-for-tat with Lord John.

The dissolution of Parliament was in sight, and Lord Aberdeen watched to see if he could support the Derby Ministry.<sup>1</sup> The two subjects which barred him from any sympathetic collusion were still kept in the forefront—Protection and the Protestant Ascendency—while Derby's Foreign Minister showed such extravagant friendship for the author of the *coup d'état* that Aberdeen, who had never welcomed or trusted the last Napoleon, felt completely estranged. He hoped the result of the elections would induce Lord Derby to take sounder views, and he was very reluctant to take any steps against the Government.

To Princess Lieven he wrote :

March 25, 1882.

I have a very good opinion of Lord Derby's principles of Foreign Policy; and I took an opportunity in the Lords of declaring my entire agreement with him. He is not familiar with these subjects, and will often be at a loss.

I have waited to see the whole ministry completed. It is scarcely necessary for me to describe the persons of whom the Government is composed. Many of them are unknown to me, except by name; and the remainder with few exceptions are not calculated to inspire much respect. I sincerely pity Lord Derby, whose great talents, and high character, are thrown away in a hopeless undertaking.

Writing later :

It is quite clear that Lord Derby has given up Protection, and hopes to maintain himself with a new Parliament, as a Conservative, although not a Protectionist minister.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Stanley became Earl of Derby on the death of his father in 1851.



Lord Derby now anxiously desired the co-operation of the Peelites, and also the Whigs wanted their help in opposition. The Derby Cabinet was full of untried men, and could he secure the support of the Peelites he would greatly strengthen himself in the eyes of the country.

In opinion, Lord Aberdeen was more in accord with Lord John than with the party of which Derby was the head. He had, however, the prejudices and prepossessions of a lifetime to overcome. The Whigs he had always opposed, particularly in his own department of foreign affairs; further, the mass of the Peelites would view with suspicion any dealings with the Whigs.

On the other hand, Derby was his personal friend, and he had acted with him on more than one occasion against the Whigs. If Lord Derby was prepared to abandon frankly and completely protection, and "No Popery"; if he would pursue a rational and consistent foreign policy, Lord Aberdeen would have preferred to see him hold office, and would certainly have helped him when he could do so. Gladstone and Sidney Herbert agreed with him. Graham did not agree with this support of Derby. The Duke of Newcastle disliked and distrusted both Lord John and Lord Derby.

As the dissolution of Parliament approached (July 1, 1852), Lord Derby made no overtures to the Peelites. Lord John, less willing to watch events and eager for office, wrote to Lord Aberdeen dissociating himself from the views held by Lord Palmerston on the future of Italy. In this he knew he was appealing to Aberdeen's Austrian proclivities. A month later he proposed combined action in support of Free Trade principles.

Lord Aberdeen was aware of the different currents, and, with men as with nations, he was bent on reconciliation and a good understanding. Gladstone was from his vehemence the most difficult member of the Peelite party to manage. He dreaded the fusion

of the Peelites with the Whigs, or what was now beginning to be called the Liberal party. He considered that Aberdeen and his friends could not leaven that lump, and that if they kept near, if not within, the Conservative party they might be more effective. They were already the Liberal wing of the Conservatives, and at his usual length Gladstone elaborated an argument on "not taking, but keeping" that place. He was on more sure though not less perplexing ground when he asserted it would be wrong to leave men with whom they differed, to join other men from whom they also differed.

Lord John Russell was now the great stumbling-block. Few of the Peelites would hear of his being Prime Minister, though they were not averse to the Liberal policy. The difficulty lay with the men, and not the measures. Lord John had a following who dreamt of the restoration of an "exclusive Government of pure Whigs." We are told, "that Lord Aberdeen sate calm and unruffled, combining as no other man could have done what there was of agreement between the different shades of opinion, and minimising the occasions of difference."

To Lord John he said :

I am sorry you should have felt some displeasure at Gladstone's remarks, although I cannot say it is surprising that you should have done so. You must forgive him for repeating sentiments which we have, all of us, been in the habit of constantly expressing for years.

I have never known much party bitterness myself. I doubt not that you have yourself sometimes attributed motives to Tory opponents which further experience has taught you to abandon.

He assures Lord John that, if it ever should be his fate to act with Gladstone, "you will find nothing but frankness and cordiality."

With the Duke of Newcastle, he expostulated. "You must allow me, my dear Duke, very strongly to recommend to you a disposition to put the most charitable construction upon all things." He points out if they are to act with Lord John it must be on a footing of mutual confidence and respect. "He may have many failings, as we all have."

From his stronghold of Buchan Ness he wrote to Gladstone :

I will not delay to write to you, although when I see and admire the various forms and colours of my granite cliffs, and when I recollect, and feel, the motto over the door of my house (*Procul negotiis beatus*) I almost wonder that I should encounter subjects so little calculated to give pleasure. I confess that after the events of the last six years I should look with no common satisfaction on the formation of a Government mainly under the auspices of Peel's friends. I still think that Lord John, from his station and past life, is the fittest person to be at the head of any Liberal Government; but he appears by common consent to be out of the question at this time. Can Peel's friends supply his place? If high character and ability only were required, *you* would be the person; but I am aware that, at present at least, this would not be practicable. Whether it would be possible for Newcastle or me to undertake the concern I cannot say; but I am sure that it must be essentially with Liberal support, and with little chance of accessions from the Protectionist camp. . . .

To Graham he wrote with a certain prevision :

The transactions of the last twenty years afford ample ground of accusation and resentment on both sides, and nothing but a strong sense of public duty, combined with a forgiving temper and hearty good



will, can extinguish jealousies and enmities such as the strife of party is apt to engender.

A few of his letters, beginning from June, are given here, as illustrating his general outlook.

### TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*June 29, 52.*

The disjointed state of different Parties renders a fusion certainly difficult, if not impossible; and this may greatly tend to the stability of the Government, who, though weaker than all other parties united, will probably be much stronger than any single party.

This is not a very comfortable prospect and might lead to serious consequences; but this is a wonderful country! The wealth, activity, prosperity and general content, are unexampled, and appear to be increasing. I have no fear of democracy or of any political evils; but you know that I have long thought we are destined to suffer from our religious differences. It is strange that such should be the case at this time of day; but there is more intense bigotry in England at this moment than in any other country in Europe. As usual, in proportion as the cause of difference is trifling, the vehemence and rancour increase.

### TO THE SAME

*Aug. 11, 1852.*

The result of our elections furnishes matter for various speculations. I told you to distrust all the calculations you might receive from your different correspondents, and I repeat this advice. No person can know the real strength of Parties, until the questions are proposed in Parliament by which the numbers can be tested. My notion is, that the Government

are strong for defence; and if it was possible for them to remain without doing anything, they would be impregnable against any attack. They must act, and propose measures of some kind; and if these should be in the slightest degree at variance with the principles of Free Trade, they will be infallibly beaten.

All this does not promise much stability; and according to general impressions their existence will not be long. But, what is to follow? That is more than I am able to say, or even to guess. There is a good deal of activity, and various combinations are in progress. Amongst these is one which would place Lansdowne at the head of the Government; and, although he has publicly taken leave of official life, the success of this project is not impossible. Palmerston might find his place in any combination; the only thing certain is, that he will not find himself at the Foreign Office. There is a strong feeling amongst many of the Whigs, against Lord John being at the head of any Government, which is unfortunate, as he possesses more ability than all of them together.

We are approaching an important day in the life of your President. If he does not make himself Emperor on the 15th or lay the ground for doing so, I suppose that we may consider that he has taken his resolution to abstain from the step altogether. The fear of socialism may do much to prolong the present state of things, and the love of tranquillity still more; but the French will have greatly changed their character, if some reaction does not take place before long. So far as we are concerned, Peace is the only great interest we have in view; and, as long as the President, Prince or Emperor is pacific, we shall be satisfied. The rest is for the French alone to determine.

On September 16 came the event which profoundly moved the whole country. The Duke of Wellington died at Walmer, and Aberdeen was deeply stirred. He wrote to Graham—now that Peel was gone, his most intimate friend:

I have been unable for the last few days to direct my thoughts to the future; they have been absorbed by the recollections of the past.

It is impossible not to remember the narrow vault in the porchway of Drayton Church, by the side of which we stood together, in conjunction with that inner chamber at Walmer Castle, where the greatest of men has breathed his last; and the deep conviction is driven home to the heart that our worldly cares are empty, and all our aspirations vain.

Still we must return to life, and to its sad realities for a season; but with minds subdued and tempers mollified by the thoughts which these solemn warnings convey beyond the grave.

#### TO PRINCESS LIEVEN

*Oct. 14, 1852.*

You say very truly that we have no longer any great man in England, since we lost the Duke. Old as he was, everyone seemed to be as much surprised as grieved by his death; and it was almost as if people thought immortality belonged to the man, as well as to his actions.

Parties are more divided than ever, and I see no prospect of such union as can produce a strong Government. But notwithstanding this state of things, I can scarcely think it possible for the present ministers to stand their ground. Lord Derby's abilities are certainly very great, but his position is so thoroughly discreditable that he will find it difficult to influence impartial and disinterested men.



## TO THE SAME

*Dec. 7, 1852.*

I think it not likely that the Government should stand, but they have a strong body of zealous supporters.

Having deserted Protection, they are in a thoroughly false position, as they only profess to change their conduct; but not their opinions.

Thiers leaves us to-day. He has been much in society, at least I have met him very frequently, and have been well satisfied with his views and opinions. He is always brilliant and entertaining; but, he appeared also, rational and moderate.

I have been told that the Emperor has said that I am his enemy. He is wrong. I do not pretend to prefer a Bonaparte dynasty; neither did anyone more regret the substitution of Louis Philippe for Charles X than I did; but this did not prevent me, in the interest of peace and the general good, from doing everything in my power to support his Government. The French people must please themselves with respect to their sovereign. We have only to desire that he will preserve peace and act with good faith.

The inevitable disaster overtook the Derby Government. It was defeated in the House of Commons on the Budget, and Lord Derby and his colleagues at once resigned. In December the Queen had to look for a new Leader and a new Prime Minister. The Tory Government had been turned out by a combination of Whigs and Peelites. The only one besides Lord Derby who had been Prime Minister before was Lord John Russell, and he was distrusted by some of all parties.

Her Majesty issued a joint summons to the Marquis of Lansdowne, the oldest Whig, and Lord Aberdeen, the oldest of the Peelites. Lord Lansdowne was prevented by illness from going, and Lord Aberdeen went alone to Osborne.

He told the Queen that had Lord Lansdowne been able to obey her summons he would have advised her to associate Lord John with himself in the commission to form a Government. He also informed Her Majesty that he must have declined any such "divided authority," for the emergency required her concentrated confidence and entire sanction.

It is improbable that the Queen would ever have contemplated such an impossible arrangement, but the fact that Lord Lansdowne should even suggest it, showed the power of the Whigs both in and out of Parliament. It was equally impossible to leave Lord John out of the Cabinet, though as events turned out, it would have been better for the peace and stability of the Government could this have been done. As it was, Aberdeen kissed the Queen's hand, and left Osborne as her Prime Minister. He had always felt that the Peelites must have the help of the Whigs, and on returning from Osborne he went at once to Lord John and discussed with him the new Cabinet.

Lord John requested that if he went to the Foreign Office he should have Lord Wodehouse, afterwards Lord Kimberley, as his Under-Secretary. To this request Lord Aberdeen willingly agreed. The next morning, after "a night's reflection," Lord John found himself unequal to the work of the Foreign Office, with the leadership of the Commons. He therefore intimated that the Home Office would suit him better. His letter was speedily followed by Lord John himself at Argyll House. He feared the effect on his political friends if he took any office under Aberdeen, and said that on the whole he thought it better he should form no part of his administration, though he offered his support. This changed the whole position of Aberdeen. He could not contemplate forming a Government dependent for its existence on the erratic support of Lord John, free himself from the restraints of office. If Aberdeen were to include a considerable number of Whigs in his Ministry, they would look for guidance to their old

leader rather than the actual Prime Minister, and what was true of the Cabinet would also be true in both Houses of Parliament. Aberdeen resolved that if Lord John persisted in this resolution he must resign the Queen's Commission which he had undertaken.

On the next day the weathercock again veered, and Lord John offered to lead in the Commons without office, and finally he said he would accept the Foreign Office, provided his tenure of office was to be of short duration, and he was allowed to lead the Commons without office.

There followed an anxious week. It was clearly impossible to include every Whig who had been in the Russell Cabinet two years before. But every disappointed Whig declared he was the victim of injustice, ill-used by Lord Aberdeen, and abandoned by Lord John. The Peelites were few in number, but of far more weight in character and in talents than the more numerous Whigs. They had taken a great part in the overthrow of the Derby Ministry, and they were marked out for high Cabinet office, had Aberdeen himself not been the most distinguished living member of the party. Even after all the great offices of State had been allocated, with the full assent of Lord John, he insisted on other Whigs being members of the Cabinet.

Graham records interviews at Argyll House with both leaders :

I never passed a week so unpleasantly. It was a battle for places from hostile camps, and the Whigs disregarded fitness for the public service altogether. They fought for their men as partisans, and all other considerations as well as consequences were disregarded. Aberdeen's patience and justice are exemplary; he is firm and yet conciliatory.

When at last the Government was formed, Graham writes :





Charles Wood. Argyll. Clarendon. J. Russell Granville. Cranworth. G. Gray. Sidney Herbert.  
 J. R. G. Graham. W. E. Gladstone. Lansdowne. Aberdeen. Palmerston. Newcastle.  
 William Molesworth.

# THE ABERDEEN CABINET.

Formed in 1853.



It is a powerful team, but it will require good driving. There are some odd tempers and queer ways among them; but on the whole they are gentlemen, and they have a perfect gentleman at their head, who is honest and direct, and who will not brook insincerity in others.

Lord Aberdeen wrote to Guizot :

*Jan. 26, 1853.*

MY DEAR M. GUIZOT,

It is indeed true that I have undertaken a great experiment, of which the ultimate success may be considered doubtful; but of which the first step, from a combination of causes, I believe could not have been accomplished by anyone else. The fate of ordinary coalitions has not been happy, and unless the members of our present union shall possess much patriotism and personal forbearance, we can scarcely anticipate a more fortunate result. Hitherto, I have every reason to be satisfied with the disposition of my colleagues, and trust it may continue. My position amongst them will be pretty much the same as that which I desire to see England occupy amongst the nations in Europe; viz. by acting the part of a moderator, and by reconciling differences and removing misunderstandings, to preserve harmony and peace.

I have no doubt, however, that on the meeting of Parliament, we shall encounter a formidable opposition. The hostile feeling will be strong, and the numbers probably great, but I am not much afraid of anything they can do, provided we should be able to overcome our financial difficulties. These are great, notwithstanding the unexampled prosperity of the country.

Our friend Gladstone is most concerned in the solution of this problem.



In March 1853 Lord Aberdeen wrote to Princess Lieven :

I have not written to you since the formation of my Government, which you were pleased to describe as an incomprehensible Trinity; but I assure you that the three persons in question are thoroughly united, and that hitherto there has been no shade of difference, or ill will, amongst us.

I endure the labour and anxiety better than I expected; but I am become still more of a philosopher than ever, and am quite indifferent about remaining at the head of affairs, or retiring altogether 'content to live, but not afraid to die.'

You must not suppose, however, that there is any question of my dissolution, or retreat. Quite the contrary. I believe we are popular in the country, and possess the goodwill of opposite parties.

Our Parliamentary strength has not yet been fully tested; but it is said to be sufficient. At all events, should this Parliament be hostile, we have always the resource of another, if necessary.

#### TO THE SAME

*May 1853.* The Government is infinitely stronger and better than I ever expected to see it. The truth is, that Gladstone has raised himself to the highest pitch of financial reputation, and has given a strength and lustre to the Government which it could not have derived from anything else.

I am not insensible to the attractions of my own position, and its great importance; but as you well know, these duties are not much to my taste. I am heartily tired, and would give much for the pleasure of an hour's conversation at your fireside.

I hope you do not at Paris expect a European war quite as much as we do in London. Every post

from Constantinople is supposed likely to give us the decisive signal, and our public are fully determined to believe that the European Nicholas has completed all his plans for the immediate and total destruction of the Turkish Empire.

I hear much of the internal tranquillity and prosperity of France, in which I heartily rejoice. This must promote the durability of peace, which is all I desire.

#### TO THE SAME

*Argyll House, Sept. 1853.*

The Eastern affair still remains unsettled, and I am unwilling to go to any great distance while this is the case.

You must not suppose that I entertain any serious apprehensions from the result, for a war under present circumstances, would be disgraceful to the civilised world. But, the many years of peace we have enjoyed have made Europe forget the horrors and miseries of war; and the satisfaction which ought to be felt at this state of happenings, and prosperity has in too many instances, given place to a very warlike spirit.

This is the case in England, and, I presume it is the same in France. Of course, it must exist in Russia; but most of all it prevails amongst the Turks, who in addition to their fanatical spirit, are encouraged by the hope of being able to rely on the assistance of England and France.

You know me well enough to be certain that no effort will be spared on my part to preserve peace, if it be possible; and I am bound to say the French Government, and especially the Emperor, appears to be animated by the same spirit. Nothing can have been more satisfactory than the whole of our concert together. You will be able to judge of the feeling in

this country, from the universal abuse of me by the Press, because I am supposed to be the most pacific minister in the Cabinet.

At the same time, I am convinced, however popular war might be at first, that no Government could stand three months by whom it was declared.

### TO THE SAME

*Argyll House, Nov. 1853.*

Perhaps you would rather receive my lamentations than that I should be altogether silent?

Yet, what can I say? The relations of England and Russia are so unexpected, so incredible, and, indeed, so unintelligible, as to make it very difficult to form any clear notion of what they really are.

The state of tension is undoubtedly great, and scarcely long to be endured; but I persist in thinking that it cannot end in actual war. I entertain this conviction, not from anything I see, or hear, or from any argument I can adduce in its support; but simply from a strong feeling that war, under present circumstances would not only be an act of insanity, but would be utterly disgraceful to all of us concerned.

I have no doubt that the Emperor of Russia himself desires peace; and the difficulties of his present position are quite sufficient to make him reasonable. But I know that he cannot submit to personal degradation; and if the Powers of Europe really hope to arrive at peace, it must be without endeavouring to humiliate him.

With a mutual desire, and goodwill, I still think that this peace would not only not be difficult; but easily obtainable, and honourable to all. In what manner, however, or at what time we may be able to overcome all obstacles, I cannot say. We must remain indefatigable in our endeavours.



I fear that the recent events which have taken place on the Danube will retard the success of our labours for peace; in proportion as the Turks have been able to make good their advance, and to repulse the Russian forces, they will be less inclined to listen to pacific counsel. It is strange how little we know of the real nature of these late events.

“The year of peace which preceded the Crimean war, is well worth attention,” says Lord Stanmore.

Associated as the Aberdeen Ministry has always been with the Crimean War, the Coalition Cabinet has always been considered a failure. But the Session of 1853 was one of brilliant success. Aberdeen, as already quoted, said that Gladstone’s Budget had thrown “a lustre” over it, and it at once marked that member of the Peelite party as the future leader in the Commons. That the Budget was passed as it was presented was due largely to Aberdeen. His steady support never wavered, and in spite of the alarms of many of his colleagues, and the threats of resignation, first heard on the Budget, he persisted in his support, and refused to allow a single alteration to be made in it.

For him it was a hard year; he records how during the whole of it he had never left town for a single day, save to go to Windsor.

The Government of India Bill was a great measure, and it was carried as proposed; there was no check or rebuff during the whole session, and Aberdeen in his correspondence continually speaks of the unity and hearty accord of the Cabinet.

“Reform,” far more than the oncoming war, was the cause of cleavage and disunion.

The opponents of Reform in the Cabinet had only one Peelite member, and there were two of the Whig party who were in opposition to it. On the negotiations with Russia, there was no clear division of parties. Those who were the most warlike in the Cabinet consisted of Lansdowne, Palmerston, and the

Duke of Newcastle. Lord John was now on the one side, now on the other. Reform possessed his mind, and Palmerston, disliking it intensely, made his discontent with the conduct of affairs in the East march with his horror of Reform.

The members of the Cabinet were all in accord in desiring the preservation of peace, and they agreed with Aberdeen's pacific measures. "Remember that the silent members of the Cabinet are all with you," wrote Lord Granville, then President of the Council, after a hot debate on the degree of support that should be given to Turkey.

There was always in Aberdeen's career some one fatal influence that made for war when he talked of peace. If Lord John had stood by Aberdeen, instead of trying to supplant him, and if Lord Stratford had not been our Ambassador in the East or had been recalled, the Crimean War might not have taken place. The Queen wrote in November to Aberdeen about Lord Stratford's private letters :

They exhibit clearly on his part a *desire* for war, and to drag us into it. When he speaks of the sword which will not only have to be drawn, but the scabbard thrown away, and says "the war, to be successful, must be a *very comprehensible one* on the part of England and France," the intention is unmistakable, and it becomes a serious question whether we are justified in allowing Sir Stratford any longer to remain in a situation which gives him the means of frustrating all our efforts of peace.

There was a pause in Crimean affairs. After the Session closed the Emperor of Russia accepted the Vienna Note, and all danger to the continuance of peace seemed over. The Note confirmed the members of the Greek Church who were subjects of the Sultan in their enjoyment of ancient rights and privileges. The Czar accepted the Note with alacrity, and it was hoped that he would evacuate the Danubian Provinces.

In this pause in the march of events Aberdeen thought he might now retire in favour of Lord John. He obtained the consent of most of his Peelite friends to this. They knew how little he cared for office, and their affection for him overruled their fears of Lord John. Aberdeen had written to Lady Haddo :

There is a general desire for war, or as it is called supporting the honour of the country, which it will be difficult to resist. I shall personally continue my pacific policy as long as I am able; but when I am overborne, as I see that I shall be, I will readily leave the executive of a different policy to others.

It is a matter of inexpressible comfort that my conscience is clear, and that I have no misgivings of the wisdom and justice of my course.

Events moved too fast for his resolution to take effect. The same guides he had always followed, duty and honour, made him feel that in a difficult post he must abide by both Queen and Government when war became inevitable.

It is easy to judge him to-day, but it is not so easy to realise what must have been the feelings of the minister to whom Princess Lieven had written : " Vous êtes le Ministre de la paix en Europe, vous ne serez jamais le Ministre de la guerre."



## CHAPTER XII

### THE CRIMEAN WAR (1854)

All my hopes for the East are in the Christianity of the East. I wish the Ottoman power in Europe no other blessing than a gentle and easy death.

GLADSTONE TO ABERDEEN, 1856.

### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Windsor Castle, Jan. 4, 1854.*

THE Queen thanks Lord Aberdeen for his two letters. She is very happy to hear that there has been so much unanimity upon the Reform measure, and that every thing passed off so well at the Cabinet. The Queen has never heard yet of the Reform measure for Scotland and Ireland.

With regard to what Lord Aberdeen writes on the Mission of Count Pourtales, the Queen wishes only to observe that it is hardly possible to imagine that the centre of Europe, (Germany,) can remain neutral, if it should come to a war between England and France on the one side, and Russia on the other; to be able to preserve such an attitude would require much greater *internal* union and strength than Germany possesses. The people siding against Russia, and attempting to coerce their Governments to follow the same course, which is very probable, might drive these into a new alliance with the Czar. It would then be of the greatest importance to have Prussia, at least, on our side from the outset; this alone,

would, in the Queen's opinion, make it possible for Austria also to keep from the Russian Alliance.

## LORD ABERDEEN TO THE QUEEN

*London, Jan. 5, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen, with his humble duty, begs to inform Your Majesty that the Cabinet to-day was fully occupied in considering the present state of negotiations at Constantinople, as explained by Lord Stratford's despatches arrived to-day. The prospect is considerably more favorable, and the new French Ambassador appears to have exercised a salutary influence in quickening the pacific tendencies of Lord Stratford. Should reasonable terms be agreed to by the Turks, it remains to be seen how far it will be possible for the Emperor, after the recent declaration of England and France, with respect to the Black Sea, to tolerate so great an affront.

It is unfortunate that there has been some difference of opinion between the Ambassadors and Admirals, regarding the safety and propriety of entering the Black Sea in the present stormy weather. Admiral Hamelin is decidedly against making the attempt; and Admiral Dundas, although ready to go alone, agrees in opinion with his French colleague.

Unless some change should take place in the Turkish Councils, there is reason to hope that in a day or two intelligence may be received of their having accepted the terms of the Representatives.

Lord Aberdeen's private correspondence for the year began with a letter from his old friend, Princess Lieven.

Her gay reproaches must have added a personal touch to his own feelings as he saw the approach of the Crimean War.

Paris, le 7 Janvier, 1854.

Mauvaise année!—que j'essaye vainement de vous souhaiter bonne. C'est un souhait bien personnel, et qui s'arrête devant les choses auxquelles vous touchez.

Ah, mon Dieu! en être venu là entre nous, avec *vous* gouvernant l'Angleterre!

Passons;—j'ai promis d'appuyer auprès de vous la petition que vous envoie Madame Delmar: c'est à dire qu'on m'à forcé de la faire. C'est un acquit de conscience, et je m'en acquitte.

Ma santé allait mieux, mais le souci que vous me donnez va bien me réculer. Je ne sais où choisir ma résidence. Je commencerai probablement par Bruxelles. Vagabonde!—à mon age! Adieu, mon cher Lord Aberdeen, mon cher ami, mon cher ennemi.

#### LORD CLARENDON TO LORD ABERDEEN

Jan. 15, 1854.

If we are to have war, it is *indispensable*, not only for our honour, but our safety, that a decisive blow should be struck as quickly as possible. We should be in danger, if a considerable portion of the fleet now in the Black Sea were not at liberty by the time the Baltic opens.

Some pressure may be necessary on Austria, but she could hardly be expected to *act* unless the Russians crossed the Danube in great force.

In a letter to the Queen, dated Jan. 21, Lord Aberdeen said the only subject discussed by the Cabinet was the Eastern question. From the despatches of Sir Hamilton Seymour it seemed probable that the Emperor would take no violent resolutions following the arrival of English and French fleets in the Black Sea.



Reports were very unfavourable as to the Emperor's acceptance of the terms of negotiation sent from Vienna. The Government had therefore determined to ask Parliament for 10,000 additional seamen and three thousand marines. Twelve thousand men were to be added to the army.

Before the meeting of Parliament, Lord Aberdeen had to consider the attacks upon Prince Albert, and the Queen's great indignation at his treatment.

This popular manifestation arose from the resignation of Lord Palmerston, and that portion of the Press which upheld that statesman, "right or wrong," thought fit to attribute his downfall to "an influence behind the Throne," and to call that influence the "chief agent of the Austro-Belgian-Coburg-Orleans clique, the avowed enemies of England, and the subservient tools of Russian ambition." It was necessary to pin the popular discontent on to some supposed grievance, and the political crime laid against the Prince was the one of being occasionally present at the interviews between the Queen and her Ministers. Also that the Queen discussed political questions with him, and that he ventured to have opinions of his own on foreign and domestic policy.

It is not necessary to retail all that the growing war fever engendered in the popular mind, fanned, as it was, by men who cared little what falsehoods were disseminated. The Prince "has outsoared the shadows of our night," and during the whole of the slanderous attacks bore himself with a dignified silence.

It was not so with the Queen, and she looked to the Prime Minister to help her in what she felt touched her honour and her warmest affections.

*Jan. 17, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen hopes he may venture to congratulate Your Majesty on the commencement of a change with respect to the newspaper attacks upon

the Prince. He observed the article to which Your Majesty refers in the *Morning Chronicle*. He believes he may certainly say it was written by Mr. Gladstone, although he would not wish it to be known. There was also a very sensible letter in the *Standard* signed D. C. L. This is the signature always assumed by Mr. Alexander Beresford Hope in his contributions to the Press, and Lord Aberdeen does not doubt that it is written by him. It is only a wonder to find it in such a quarter, and it shows some disposition on the part of that scurrilous paper to alter its course.

The Queen answered on January 18 :

With reference to the infamous attacks on *us*, (for it is the Queen who is indirectly attacked or still more the Throne,) the Queen is glad to hear what Lord Aberdeen says on the subject. . . . If the country really has such incomprehensible and reprehensible notions, there is no remedy but the introduction of the *Salic Law*, for which she would heartily vote. A woman *must* have a support and an adviser; and who can this properly be but her husband, whose duty it is to watch over her interests private and public? From this sacred duty, no *earthly* power can absolve him! Were it not for the Prince, the Queen's health and strength would long since have sunk under the multifarious duties of her position as a Queen, and the mother of a large family. Were the Queen to believe that these unprincipled and immoral insinuations really were those of any, but a wicked and despicable few, she would leave a position which nothing but her domestic happiness could make her endure, and retire to private life—leaving the country to choose another ruler after their own heart's content.

But she does not think so ill of her country, though she must say that these disgraceful exhibitions

will leave behind them very bitter feelings in her breast, which time alone can eradicate.

If the whole is brought before Parliament, which would be better, but which seems almost doubtful now, the Queen hopes it will be on the first night of the Session, and thus be done with.

In his reply :

Lord Aberdeen humbly hopes, Your Majesty will not permit these odious and scandalous attacks, to weigh too much upon Your Majesty's mind. There cannot be a doubt that on the meeting of Parliament, the contemptible nature of the whole affair will be made apparent.

#### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

The Queen has been seriously meditating not to open Parliament in person, as she did not wish, and could not expose herself to, some insult, which she thought might possibly be offered to the Prince and herself in their procession through the streets to the House of Lords. If, on enquiry, Lord Aberdeen finds that there is no reason to fear this,—the Queen *will* open Parliament.

Lord Aberdeen's influence and tact won the day, but the Queen told him that very painful impressions had been left on her mind by the infamous fabrications against herself and the Prince.

They have wounded the Queen deeply, and she must say that she thinks such unfounded assertions really leave a blot on the fair fame of this country for good sense and loyalty, which will not so easily be wiped out.

Parliament met on January 31 and Ministers had no difficulty in facing the attacks on the Prince,



and showing his devoted loyalty to the Crown and country. The Queen wrote to Baron Stockmar and expressed "her fulness of joy at the triumphant refutation of all the calumnies. Lord Aberdeen's speech was exactly calculated to appeal to the sense of fair play and even-handed justice on behalf of one who had no means of defending himself." To the Queen the Prime Minister wrote :

Your Majesty may be entirely satisfied with the result, so far as related to the odious calumnies affecting the Prince. Lord Aberdeen has always been of opinion that the first meeting of Parliament would at once annihilate all these efforts of faction and malevolence; and it is with great satisfaction he assures Your Majesty that he never saw more cordial unanimity exhibited in the House of Lords than on this occasion. Your Majesty may, therefore, safely dismiss this subject from your mind; although it will always remain as a disgraceful example of party spirit, and of the credulity of the people.

The Queen replied from Windsor on February 1, 1854 :

The Queen is anxious to express without delay her extreme satisfaction at the manner in which the subject nearest and dearest to her heart, has passed off in both Houses of Parliament, and at the very admirable and very judicious manner, in which our kind friend Lord Aberdeen discharged this delicate duty.

Lord Aberdeen also wrote to the Prince, who had written to acknowledge Lord Aberdeen's speech. He said his efforts were in the cause of truth and justice; and he foresaw that great reaction, which set in regarding the Prince and his relations to the Throne and country. Lord Aberdeen said it might

not be difficult to trace the origin of the "delusion," but he thought it probable the Prince might prefer to treat the whole matter with contempt and to consign it to oblivion.

The Queen, writing to Baron Stockmar on the episode which had strengthened the ties to her Ministry, says :

We are both well, and I am sure will now recover our necessary strength and equanimity to meet the great difficulties and trials which are before us—Trials we must have; but what are they, if we are together?"

The Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament spoke of the great efforts which were being made by Great Britain and her allies to preserve and restore peace between Russia and Turkey. Lord Aberdeen earnestly believed that these efforts should be made effectual. He had noted that when he expressed his own convictions among his colleagues, "they then made themselves ready for war." Mr. Gladstone shared his misgivings. Writing to Lord Aberdeen before the Cabinet which considered the Queen's Speech, he says :

It appears to me that an immense responsibility lies upon us with reference to the Cabinet of to-morrow. I can feel no comfort in the idea that the Emperor of Russia was in the wrong some time ago; the question for us is, who is in the right now?

#### TO THE QUEEN

*London, Feb. 8, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen with his humble duty, begs to inform Your Majesty that, on the whole, the appearances in the Cabinet to-day were favourable to peace. No rash or hasty determination was proposed; and as the attitude of Austria has decidedly become more firm, it was thought most prudent to leave her to take the initiative in future proceedings.

In the mean time, active preparations, both naval and military, are in progress. By the end of the present month, ten thousand men will be embarked for Malta, and the naval recruiting is also going on most prosperously.

These as well as other preparations, are undoubtedly wise and prudent; but Lord Aberdeen cannot abandon the hope that they may still turn out to be unnecessary.

It was thought by the Cabinet that the time had arrived, when it might be expedient to communicate to Austria and Prussia the engagements entered into by England and France in their recent exchange of Notes, and to ascertain from the German Powers, what they would be prepared to do in the event of war. It might be hoped that, either now or hereafter, they would be disposed to become parties to these engagements. The advance of an Austrian corps of 25,000 men to the frontiers of Wallachia is a step of some importance, although it does not very clearly appear with what view it has been taken.

The Cabinet also very fully considered the details of the expedition to Malta of 10,000 men, to be in readiness for service in the East. The French profess to have 20,000 ready by the end of this month; but both these corps can only be considered as preliminary to a much larger force being employed in the event of actual war.

*London, Feb. 26, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen with his humble duty, begs to inform Your Majesty that another Cabinet was held to-day, in order to consider the draft of a letter which it is proposed that Lord Clarendon should address to Count Nesselrode, and in which he should



summon the Russian Government to evacuate the Principalities. The Messenger will be directed to wait six days for an answer, and the British Government will consider the refusal, or the silence of Count Nesselrode, as equivalent to a declaration of war, and proceed to act accordingly. An assurance has been received in general terms, of the intention of Austria to support this demand; and a telegraphic message has been sent to Vienna with a desire to know how far the Austrian Government will join in the summons, or in what manner support will be given. No answer has yet been received, and Lord Aberdeen would think it right not to make the summons until Austria has declared her intention: but the Cabinet appear to desire that the letter should be sent to-morrow evening.

The period fixed for the complete evacuation of the Principalities is the 30th of April.

As it cannot be supposed that the Emperor of Russia will listen to such a demand as this, immediate hostilities must be expected with all their consequences.

### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Buckingham Palace, Feb. 26, 1854.*

The Queen has received Lord Aberdeen's letter of this day.

To be able to form a judgment on the important question to which it refers, the Queen would require to be furnished with the exact terms of "the general assurance" which Austria has given with respect to it. The Queen, however, does not doubt for a moment that the gain of a day or two in making the summons to Russia, could not be compared to the advantage of being able to make the summons conjointly with Austria.

## LORD ABERDEEN TO THE QUEEN

*London, Feb. 27, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen with his humble duty is happy to inform Your Majesty that in consequence of the highly satisfactory intelligence received this morning from Vienna, there can be no reason for delaying the transmission of Lord Clarendon's letter to Count Nesselrode. Lord Westmoreland, although not replying to Lord Clarendon's telegraphic message, sends an amended form of Convention, which assures the concurrence of Austria in the summons made to the Russian Government, and, indeed, contains terms which can mean nothing but co-operation in war. The alterations made by the Austrian Government upon the proposed plan of Convention are all in this sense.

## LORD ABERDEEN TO LORD CLARENDON

*Argyll House, Feb. 28, 1854.*

I had not seen the *Times* before going down to the House of Lords to-day, where I was told of a leading Article which had appeared this morning, detailing the whole of our proceedings at the Cabinet on Sunday. Not only is the summons to the Emperor of Russia mentioned, but the delay of six days allowed for an answer, as well as the date fixed for the total evacuation of the Principalities! Now this is really too bad, and is highly discreditable to the Government.

At a time when I was protesting in the House of Lords against revealing the intentions of the Government, our most secret decisions are made public! I can conceive nothing more mischievous than such disclosures; and it is quite necessary that somehow or other this evil should be corrected.

Unfortunately, it is believed, that the *Times* is especially my organ; although, in fact, there is very

seldom an article in it from which I do not entirely dissent. It can only be from the Foreign Office that this information is obtained; and it seems to me very essential that the practice should be entirely discontinued.

## LORD CLARENDON TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Grosvenor Crescent, Feb. 28, 1854.*

The newspapers are among the many curses of one's official existence, and I never was more disgusted than in reading the Article in the *Times* this morning. But I am at a loss to imagine why you say that it can only be from the Foreign Office that this information is obtained, unless you suppose that *I* furnished it. I really do not believe that there is any one base, or stupid, enough in the Foreign Office to commit such an outrage, and the Article moreover contains an announcement of our naval operations in the Baltic, about which nothing is known in the Foreign Office. I have not much doubt, however, as to *how* the information was obtained, and before I got your note I had determined to bring the matter before the Cabinet to-morrow, though, of course, without saying on whom my suspicion falls. I met Delane in Westminster Hall, as I was going to the House of Lords, this evening, and asked him where he got the information. He would not tell me, but he promised that the subject should not be adverted to again.

## LORD ABERDEEN TO THE QUEEN

*London, March 4, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen with his humble duty begs to inform your Majesty that the principal business of the Cabinet to-day was the consideration of Mr. Gladstone's plan of finance for the current year.



It was decided that Mr. Gladstone should propose on Monday to double the present rate of Income Tax for half a year, instead of making a less increase for a whole year. This it was thought would be more welcome to the House of Commons, and at the same time more productive.

The different branches of revenue appear all to be in the most flourishing condition : but the additional expense connected with the war above the estimated surplus, will amount to more than three millions and a half, for which it is necessary to provide.

#### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Osborne, March 11, 1854.*

We are just starting to see the Fleet, which is to sail at *one* for its *important destination*. It will be a solemn moment ! Many a heart will be very heavy, and many a prayer, including her own, will be offered up, for its safety and its glory !

#### LORD ABERDEEN TO THE QUEEN

*London, March 12, 1854.*

Lord Aberdeen with his humble duty begs to inform your Majesty that he received a visit to-day from General Von der Gröben, who is the Bearer of a letter to Your Majesty from the King of Prussia, and with whom he had formerly some acquaintance. Lord Aberdeen could not understand the precise object of his visit, which appeared only to be to express the distress and difficulty of the King, and his determination not to sign the proposed Convention. In answer to Lord Aberdeen's exhortation to sign the Convention, and to all his arguments, the General replied that the chief reason which had determined the King against it, was an intimation which had been held out, as Lord Aberdeen understood by the

Chev. Bunsen, of a probable increase of territory on the part of Prussia, in the event of the King taking favourable consideration of the proposal of the Maritime Powers. This had so much shocked the King, as to confirm him in the determination of doing nothing which would indicate a desire to profit by the defeat of Russia.

General Von der Gröben maintained that the King was as much opposed as ever to the policy of Russia, and, if not pressed, would ultimately be compelled to take a part against Her.

#### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Osborne, March 13, 1854.*

The State of Affairs at Berlin, or rather more at the Prussian Court, is so confused, and seems so wanting in all strength of purpose, and so vacillating, that one can but stand amazed at it. The Queen is quite at a loss to understand what this new incident about Chevalier Bunsen can mean. She is, however, inclined to agree with General Von der Gröben that the King will in the end take part against Russia.

Lord Aberdeen received a letter from the King of the Belgians, and his answer conveyed his convictions on the hopes of a still possible peace.

#### THE KING OF THE BELGIANS TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Lacken, March 17, 1854.*

Affairs become more and more complicated, and our long peace is at an end. I think I see in the Emperor of Russia symptoms indicating a wish to get out of his difficulty; a final arrangement must one day be made, and then you will always meet the difficulty of the protection to be granted to the Christian subjects of the Porte. Why not, therefore,

push the Porte to grant a complete emancipation to her Christian subjects. The *theory*, is, of course, that one has no right to interfere with the internal Government of Turkey, but you have certainly, and particularly as matters stand at present, the right to make such arrangements as you want, to secure the existence of the Porte, and to do away for ever with the protectorate of one power, which, though it should so be abandoned, must continue to exist as long as the real necessity for it remains.

#### LORD ABERDEEN TO THE KING OF THE BELGIANS

*Downing Street, March 20, 1854.*

I forbear from troubling Your Majesty with reflections on the lamentable result which now appears imminent, and the failure of all our endeavours to preserve peace; for I know how deeply Your Majesty feels this impending calamity.

I am disposed to agree with Your Majesty in thinking that the Emperor of Russia, even at this moment, might be willing to withdraw from his present difficult position, if he could do so with a due regard to his honour: but this is the great problem to be solved.

The Emperor has always professed that the protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte was the great, and indeed, the sole object he had in view. Now it is certain that we have already obtained more from the Porte than was ever asked by the Emperor, and the condition of the Christians will be still further improved. It does not appear impossible that the Emperor should take advantage of these privileges being granted, and make them the ground of pacific propositions.

Anything which would enable the Emperor to evacuate the Principalities, ought, in my opinion,



to put an end to the war at once; and if such were the case, I should feel confident that all our difficulties would cease.

This step would require great courage and self-control; but it might be accomplished by diplomatic dexterity. At all events, I can see no other mode by which we can now escape the dreadful consequences of war.

Most truly do I pray that whatever measures Your Majesty may undertake, and in whatever quarter, in the interests of peace, may be attended with all the success they deserve.

Several Bishoprics had become vacant during these years. The Queen corresponded at great length with her Prime Minister on these appointments, always showing great interest in the choice and constantly impressing on Lord Aberdeen the necessity of great caution. Of one she writes that his views as regards "Church matters must be moderate, or Lord Aberdeen would not have recommended him." Again, she "hears from all sides that the individual is considered extremely High Church in his views." Such an appointment the Queen would consider "unfortunate." Lord Aberdeen puts his own view before her :

In all matters connected with the Episcopal Bench, Your Majesty will never receive from him recommendations of any but such as he is satisfied possess true moderation of character and opinions. Provided these qualifications exist, Lord Aberdeen is indifferent to what party in the Church such persons may incline. He thinks it would be unwise and unjust to exclude good men in consequence of a tendency either to High Church or Low Church; although he would at once equally reject those holding High Church doctrines which lead towards Popery, and

Low Church opinions tending to fanaticism, and to bring the Church of England into contempt.

The autocracy of departments is ever present, and the Queen suggests that the Office of Works should be reminded Kings are not lightly to be removed from the Royal Palace of Westminster.

*Buckingham Palace, March 23, 1854.*

The Queen must (in confidence) complain to Lord Aberdeen of the manner in which matters are conducted in the Office of Works. Things are done and decided on, really as if she were not in existence. The Queen sends Lord Aberdeen a note, (which she begs him not to make use of, as it might bring others into difficulties,) to give him an instance of what she complains of. Then again she hears that it is thought of placing Sir Robert Peel's Statue where Richard Cœur de Lion at present is, which is a question that ought to be carefully considered, and submitted to the Queen, before any decision is taken, as it involves the whole general arrangement of the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. Would Lord Aberdeen be so good as to speak *generally* to Sir William Molesworth, and tell him that no decisions of the nature alluded to should be taken without his having submitted the proposal to her, either directly to herself or through the Prince.

#### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

*April 1, 1854.*

The Queen rejoices to see the Debate was so favourable in the House of Lords, and that it *was* concluded in the House of Commons.

She is rather startled at seeing Lord Aberdeen's answer to Lord Roden upon the subject of a day of humiliation, as he has never mentioned the subject to her, and it is one upon which she feels strongly.

The only thing the Queen ever heard about it, was from the Duke of Newcastle, who suggested the possibility of an *appropriate prayer* being introduced into the Liturgy, in which the Queen quite agreed, but he was strongly against a day of humiliation, in which the Queen also entirely agreed, as she thinks we have recourse to them far too often, and they thereby lose all effect. The Queen, therefore, hopes that this will be reconsidered carefully, and a *prayer* substituted for the day of *humiliation*. Were the services selected for these days of a different kind to what they are, the Queen would feel less strongly about it; but they always select Chapters from the Old Testament and Psalms, which are so totally inapplicable that it does away with all the effect it ought to have. Moreover, really to say, (as we probably should,) that the great sinfulness of the nation has brought about this war, when it is the selfishness and ambition, and want of honesty, of *one man* and his servants, who have brought this about, while our conduct has been throughout actuated by unselfishness and honesty, would be too manifestly repulsive to the feelings of every one, and would be a mere bit of hypocrisy.

Let there be a prayer expressive of our great thankfulness for the immense benefits we have enjoyed, and for the immense prosperity of this country, and entreating God's help and protection in the coming struggle. In this the Queen would join heart and soul. If there is to be a day set apart, let it be for prayer in this sense.

#### THE QUEEN TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Buckingham Palace, April 3, 1854.*

Would Lord Aberdeen see the Archbishop, and speak to him on the subject of the service selected



for the *day of prayer* in the sense the Queen spoke to him ?

It would surely be better to have it soon, either next week, or the following. Would Lord Aberdeen also discourage any proposition for her going to any *Public Church* on this occasion. She would wish to attend the service in her own Chapel as usual. When peace is made, then we can go in Public to Westminster Abbey, or St. Paul's !

The Queen did not go to any Public place of worship when there was a Fast-day, the year of the Irish Famine, but attended service in the Chapel here.

On February 12 Lord Aberdeen received the first of Lord Palmerston's letters on the proposed Reform Bill. He had circulated a memorandum to the Cabinet on the points in which he differed from the Bill. In his letter Lord Palmerston states his objection to the proposal to give "the right of voting to anybody who pays forty shillings a year indirect taxation." The length of the Cabinet discussions on Foreign Affairs rendered it impossible, Lord Palmerston said, for him to bring forward his views, and he therefore wrote at length on them to the Prime Minister. As Lord Aberdeen read the letter, he must have felt that the Franchise Bill was probably the stalking horse for Lord Palmerston's objections to the trend of affairs in the East.

Lord Aberdeen answered the same day :

I have received your letter very late to-night. Your objections to the Reform Bill are clearly and ably stated, and I do not deny that they may possess considerable weight ; but you will forgive me for saying that I think this is scarcely a proper time, or place for urging them. We have had three or four Cabinets at which it might have been done, perhaps with effect, but, at all events, with the certainty of their meeting

with full consideration. To bring forward these objections and to communicate them to me on the very eve of the production of the Bill, is placing me in a most embarrassing position. The provisions of the Bill have been sanctioned by the Cabinet; and even if I agreed with you in all the objections you have stated, it would not now be in my power to take another step for giving them effect. Indeed, I think, it would be most unfair to Lord John to make any such attempt.

To Lord John, the letter was immediately forwarded. In commenting on the nature of the objections raised, Lord Aberdeen says :

It can scarcely indicate any hostile intentions to-morrow; but we must be prepared on the second reading of the Bill.

Only let us have peace, which I persist in saying is *not hopeless*, and we may defy all opposition and intrigue.

Lord John replied. He saw no reason for altering the provisions of the Bill, and entirely objected "to stigmatise the whole body of the working men of England as tools in the hands of their leaders, not free agents and ignorant," as Lord Palmerston had done in his objections to giving them the franchise. In conclusion, he says : " I shall be very glad if peace is preserved, but I very much doubt the prospect of it. Perhaps, however, we may have negotiations till May."

Lord Aberdeen's second son was in waiting on the Prince Consort. The approaching war had withdrawn him from that service, and the Queen had written : " We are much grieved to part with Colonel Gordon, and our best wishes will ever attend him." Lord Aberdeen, replying, acknowledged his gratitude in the Queen's " gracious interest respecting the interest

of his son. Although removed at present from the personal service of the Prince by professional duty, he can assuredly never forget the unvaried kindness and condescension of Your Majesty."

In the midst of the thickening anxieties both in Parliament and in the East, the Queen did not forget the personal interest of her Prime Minister.

*Ap. 6, 1854.* The Queen feels much for Lord Aberdeen the separation from Colonel Gordon to-day, and is quite anxious for Mrs. Gordon, who has behaved so beautifully. She would be thankful if Lord Aberdeen would let her hear how she has borne the sad separation, and say to her how much the Queen feels for her.

Lord Aberdeen had now to put before the Queen the crisis produced in Parliament by the prospect of the Reform Bill.

If the Cabinet unanimously supported the second reading, and if the Government were defeated in the Commons, Lord John would take an early opportunity of dissolving Parliament.

If the Cabinet were not agreed to support the second reading, then two secessions would take place. Either Palmerston and Lansdowne would resign, or Lord John and Sir James Graham.

In either case Lord Aberdeen said it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for him to carry on the Government.

As he reviewed the situation Lord Aberdeen thought there was only one remaining course. This was the possibility of Lord John consenting to the temporary postponement of the Bill. Doing this might lay the Government open to the charge of bad faith, and others would welcome it, in the hope of getting rid of Parliamentary Reform for ever. Lord Aberdeen thought that postponement was the right policy, but doubted if Lord John could be persuaded to adopt it.



In writing to Lord John, the Prime Minister said he was prepared to find the Queen much affected by the present state of the Cabinet; he reported that these feelings prevailed to a still greater degree than he expected. Lord Aberdeen had promised the Queen to do everything in his power to remove difficulties, and he proceeded to negotiate with the various members of his Cabinet.

It was a thankless task, and one made additionally heavy by his pressing anxieties in the prospect of a war.

The postponed date for the second reading of the Reform Bill was drawing near, and Lord John wrote on March 23 to Lord Aberdeen :

I presume that the Emperor of Russia will not accede to our summons : that we shall be at war before the month is over; and that no decisive operations will take place before May. The question will then arise, shall we press the second reading of the Reform Bill?

Lord John argued various courses. For himself, he said he was pledged to Reform, and "what is much more, I think a period of increased taxation a fit period for giving enlarged franchises." Lord John believed others in the Cabinet would not agree, and while he could not remain in the Cabinet if the Bill were dropped, he thought others might do so, and his giving up the leadership of the House of Commons would not seriously injure the Government.

Lord Aberdeen replied that he thought the Cabinet would object altogether, under the present crisis, to take the second reading on April 27. He continues :

Postponement of the Reform Bill means postponement during war. Now I should not much object to postponement, provided an honest desire existed to bring the war to the earliest possible termination, and to neglect no opportunity of restoring

peace consistently with honour. The exigencies of the country might justify this, if coupled with a pledge to return zealously to the work of domestic reform, as soon as we were relieved from foreign exertions. But instead of this, we have the plan sketched out of a "thirty years' war," and, even if we could dictate peace at Moscow, we have the certainty of our colleagues undertaking Parliamentary reform with indifference, if not with reluctance.

Lord John again returned to the question of the Reform Bill. After enumerating the difficulties which beset it in Parliament, he said he owed "it to the country, to the Queen and to you, to do all I can to lighten the difficulty. I am ready on my part, if you and Graham concur, to postpone the Bill till after Easter."

Lord Aberdeen agreed :

The Bill will have been for a month before the Country. It has found favour with the public, as a liberal, wise, and honest measure; and I think that the people may fairly expect to see its principle affirmed by the House of Commons without delay.

If you read the Bill a second time, it could produce no inconvenience to the public business, as it would not be necessary to proceed with the Committee until after Easter; or at such time as might be thought desirable.

I have never been a great Parliamentary Reformer; but having conscientiously adopted the principle of Reform, and believing that the present measure is perfectly safe, and likely to be generally advantageous, I am clearly of opinion that we ought not to give way to a combination of persons, many of whom we may believe to be prompted by very questionable motives. Should we postpone the Bill, it would be a virtual

defeat, and we shall not be long in experiencing its effects.

Writing to Lord John Russell, Lord Aberdeen says :

It would be great affectation on my part if I were to pretend to be more anxious in the cause of Parliamentary Reform than yourself. I can, therefore, with a safe conscience agree to any course which you may think best calculated to promote the ultimate success of the measure. In all matters connected with Parliamentary Reform, I am disposed to place myself entirely in your hands. It forms such a prominent feature of your political life, and you have considered the whole question so fully, that be the result what it may, I have no doubt I shall be perfectly satisfied.

I wish that I could feel as much at ease on the subject of the unhappy war in which we are about to be engaged. The abstract justice of the cause, although indisputable, is but a poor consolation for the inevitable calamities of all war, or for a decision which I am not without fear may prove to have been impolitic and unwise. My conscience upbraids me the more, because seeing as I did from the first, all that was to be apprehended, it is possible by a little more energy and vigour, not on the Danube, but in Downing Street it might have been prevented.

Palmerston completed the forces which made for the postponement of the Bill, by offering in a personal letter himself to withdraw. He pointed out to Lord John that this course would have the merit of not leaving the Government "in a moment of European crisis" without a leader in the House of Commons, a Minister of Foreign Affairs, or a Minister of War—three offices which, if vacated because the Reform Bill was pushed on at all hazards, must be injurious to the public service.



The Queen wrote "the sacrifice of personal feeling which, no doubt, this may cost Lord John will, she is certain, be amply compensated by the conviction that he has done so for the interest and tranquillity of his Sovereign and country, to whom a dissolution of the present Government would have been a source of immense danger and evil."

Lord John in his reply gave vent to those personal feelings which were always uppermost with him, and he stated that "Lord Aberdeen was the only person who behaved with a due regard to the honour of the administration." The rest, to his mind, had sacrificed everything to keep the Ministry together.

The Queen, writing to Lord Aberdeen on April 11, the day on which Lord John announced the withdrawal of the Bill in the Commons, expressed her anxiety to know the result of the deliberations—"Whatever they may be, she trusts that he will remain where he is."

If Lord Aberdeen had seen a hope of release for himself in the crisis at home, he concealed it from all—save perhaps his Sovereign. Parliament for the moment had lost all desire for the Reform Bill, and was fully aware that its introduction had given a severe shake to the stability of the Cabinet.

The Queen had written to King Leopold in February that the war "was popular beyond all belief." It was popular with neither Lord Russell nor with the Prime Minister. The Prince Consort had noted this in a letter to Baron Stockman:

Even yet Aberdeen cannot rise to the level of the situation; the war is in his eyes like a civil war, like a war between England and Scotland! I do not like it myself, but for all that I cannot conjure up his feeling within myself, perhaps because I was born in 1819, and he was serving in 1813 and 1814 in the headquarters of the allies.

It was not Lord Aberdeen's habit to look for causes of offence or to assert that his colleagues had failed

him. He wrote to Lord John, after his speech withdrawing the Bill in the House, and then turned back to the almost hopeless task of making peace even at the eleventh hour.

Writing on April 4 to Lord Clarendon, he says :

With reference to Cowley's despatch respecting troops being sent to the Greek provinces of Turkey, I feel bound to say that I could not bring myself to employ British troops against the Christian subjects of the Porte.

On the same day, Lord John Russell wrote on the proposed postponement of the second reading of the Reform Bill. He said it placed him "in a very invidious position," and he pointed out that "a dissolution which would give a new Parliament for the present Ministers, or new Ministers for the present Parliament," was the alternative plan which suited best his own ideas. On the 8th of April he wrote requesting Lord Aberdeen to lay before the Queen his resignation "of a seat in the Cabinet, as one of Her Majesty's confidential advisers."

On the meeting of the Cabinet, Lord John was urged by the unanimous wish of all his colleagues to withdraw his Bill, and also his resignation.

He was obliged to yield on both points. His reluctance is only partially explained by his conviction that Lord Palmerston objected to Reform, apart from the situation as to war in the East. Perhaps also he saw in prospect a day when as Prime Minister he might himself carry the Reform of the Franchise, on which he had set his heart.

#### TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL

*Argyll House, April 12, 1854.*

I cannot help congratulating you on the success which attended your decision last night. Had it been otherwise, I should have reproached myself as having

been more or less instrumental in leading you to adopt it; but I felt that there could be no danger to yourself.

It is true that we have lost the Reform Bill, which is undoubtedly a great sacrifice; but we have preserved your honour, character, and influence, not only undiminished but increased.

*Buckingham Palace, April 12, 1854.*

The Queen had meant to speak to Lord Aberdeen yesterday about this day of "prayer and supplication," as *she particularly* wishes it should be called, and *not* "fast and humiliation," as if *after* a calamity. Surely it should *not* be a day of *mourning*?

The Queen spoke very strongly about it to the Archbishop, and urged great care in the selection of the service. Would Lord Aberdeen inculcate the Queen's wishes into the Archbishop's mind that there be *no Jewish imprecations against our enemies, &c.*, but an earnest expression of thankfulness to the Almighty for the immense blessings we have enjoyed, as well as prayers for protection to our forces by land and sea and to ourselves in the coming struggle. If Lord Aberdeen will look at the Service to be used at Sea, he will find a beautiful prayer "To be used before a Fight at Sea," which the Queen thinks (as well as other portions of that fine service) would be very applicable to the occasion, as there is no special mention of the sea.

Lord John has made his statement very properly; and in writing to the Queen this morning he says, "Your Majesty will perceive that Lord John Russell has stated as to the future, he hopes correctly, the course which Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to sanction by your communications to him." She hears that he was very much affected during part of



the time, and Lady John, according to Mrs. Gladstone's account, dreadfully so.

We must all feel that we owe the settlement of these alarming difficulties to that great spirit of fairness, justice, and unflinching singleness of purpose, and rare unselfishness, which so eminently distinguish our kind and valued friend Lord Aberdeen.

Lord Aberdeen, in replying to the Queen, said that he had proposed to the Archbishop that it should be a Proclamation from the Council for a day of general humiliation and prayer, "and not for a day of general fasting and humiliation." A general fast he thought would not be observed, and would be regarded as a mere formality. "Humiliation must always be a duty, and must always be right under all circumstances, whether of prosperity or adversity." The Queen approved the terms in which the Day was to be kept, and added, "ought there not to be a prayer used every Sunday *while* the war lasts? The one 'For War and Tumult,' does not seem very appropriate."

In following Lord Aberdeen's private correspondence with the Sovereign and with his colleagues there is no letter which speaks of the declaration of war. In the beginning of March, in the closing days of which month war was declared, Lord Aberdeen and Lord John had corresponded as to the prevention of war. Lord John said :

The only course which would have prevented war would have been to have counselled acquiescence to the Turks, and not to have allowed our fleet to leave Malta. But that was a course to which Lansdowne, Palmerston, Clarendon, Newcastle, and I, would not have consented, so that you would only have broken up your Government, if you had insisted upon it. My belief is that the Czar, after acquiescence and sub-

mission, would only have given the Sultan six months' respite.

Lord Aberdeen's reply was written the same day. He began by saying he had no wish to continue a correspondence "which in my view of the case could only lead to my own condemnation." He differed from Lord John that detaining the fleet at Malta would have prevented the war.

On the contrary, I believe that there were in the course of the negotiations, two occasions when, if I had been supported, peace might have been honourably and advantageously secured. I will especially refer to the opportunity afforded by the transactions which took place at the meeting of the two Emperors at Olmütz. But, I repeat that the want of support, although it may palliate, cannot altogether justify to my own conscience the course which I pursued. However, there is no use in further discussions upon that which is past : we must now look to the future.

The Russian Ambassador had left London on February 7, and our Ambassador at St. Petersburg was recalled the same day. War had not been formally declared, but it could not be delayed. At the end of February the Austrian Ambassador had let it be known that if France and England would fix a date for the evacuation of the Principalities by Russia, after which, if the notice were disregarded, hostilities would commence, Austria would support the summons. The Notes were dispatched simultaneously from London and Paris, and April 30 was given as the day for the evacuation.

The Emperor of Russia received the Notes on March 14, and through his Chancellor he intimated that he did not intend to make any reply.

On March 24 this decision reached London.

On the 27th the Emperor of the French addressed a message to the Corps Législatif that Russia having refused to reply to the summons of France and England, Russia with regard to France was in a state of war, and he laid the whole responsibility on Russia.

The Queen in a similar message to the House of Lords announced the failure of her negotiations with Russia, and the next day war was formally declared.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CRIMEAN WAR (1854)

Their swords are a thousand, their bosoms are one.  
They are true to the last of their blood and their breath  
And like reapers descend to the harvest of death.

CAMPBELL.

IN the meantime, war having been declared, both Houses agreed on addresses to the Crown assuring it of their support. Lord John went over the course of the negotiations, and declared he would not consider any terms of peace honourable or just which did not provide for the security of the Turkish Empire. He at once proceeded to draw up memoranda concerning the control of the army, and also for the disposition of the troops engaged on the fronts.

Lord Aberdeen, while agreeing in the main with the changes of Army administration at home, did not agree that Sweden should be asked to join the Alliance, and to furnish a force of 50,000 men in return for subsidies from England and France. He thought that the blow against Russia should be struck in the south, and not in the north.

Writing to Lord John on April 27 :

I think, in order to lay down satisfactorily any course of action for the conduct of the war, we ought to understand a little more clearly what are the objects we have in view. I had imagined these to be the protection of Turkey against Russian aggression, the evacuation of the Turkish territory by the Russian forces, and, generally, the independence of the Sultan,

in his domestic administration, as well as the integrity of his Empire. I have recently, however, heard much of securing the independence of Europe, the progress of civilisation and the overthrow of barbarism. These are objects too vague to be easily understood, or practically to regulate our proceedings. It is better that we should confine ourselves to such as are more comprehensible, and which are capable of attainment.

With this view, I think that the allied force should be directed towards the Danube, either for the defence of the passes of the Balkan, or in any manner to repel Russian attack. But to do this, we must be strengthened ourselves, and the French must be also reinforced. We ought not to place much reliance upon Turkish support. I should be sorry to see any great disparity between our numbers and those of the enemy. We might, perhaps, consider the Turks pretty much in the same light as the Duke of Wellington did the Spaniards.

I see that you have at last arrived at a knowledge of the true state of the Christian population of the northern provinces of Turkey : and this would make a repetition of the retreat of the Duke of Wellington in Portugal quite impossible. The Christians would not devastate the country, but would receive the invaders with open arms.

All this you admit, but I think you are a little inconsistent when you imagine that the insurrection in the southern provinces is the result of Russian intrigue, and of encouragement by the Greek Government. You may be assured that nothing of the kind is necessary, and that almost every Christian man, woman and child, throughout the Turkish Empire must in their hearts pray for the success of the Czar.

This is the great original vice of our position, which from the first I have endeavoured to point out,

and which will become more embarrassing every day. If it should be thought desirable to garrison the towns of Prevesa and Volo with English and French troops, I have no objection; but most assuredly I would not place them at the disposal of Sir H. Ward, or of Mr. Wyse; nor in any case admit of their being brought into collision with the Christian insurgents, except in defence of the town in which they were stationed.

Now, with respect to the north, the proposal to subsidise Sweden opens a very serious consideration, for if once you begin this system, you must be prepared should the war unhappily continue, to see no Power strike a blow without a subsidy.

There is something awkward and obscure in the whole of this Swedish negotiation. Is it the Prince Royal who treats secretly with Mr. Grey; but where are the Ministers? Where are the Chambers? Where is the King?

If Sweden joins us, it will be for objects of her own, to which we shall become more or less pledged. Sweden is not moved, as we are, by a regard for the balance of power in Europe, or any desire to redress the wrongs of Turkey. We must, therefore, be bound to attend to Swedish interests, and greatly to increase the complications of the war. It may be very well to have a powerful fleet in the Baltic, to blockade Russian ports, to destroy Russian trade; but our attention ought really to be directed to the Danube. The evacuation of the Principalities would, in truth, be a step towards a termination of the war. For this reason, if I subsidised at all, I would much rather engage Austria to bring her 150,000 men into the field, where we most want them, and where they would do much to bring the whole affair to a successful termination.



On the same day, Lord Aberdeen reported on the Cabinet to the Queen. "It was determined to make an effort to concentrate an English and French force towards the Danube or the Balkan, with a view of meeting the Austrian suggestions." The decision to capture all Greek vessels carrying supplies of arms and ammunition to the Greek insurgents, to send an English regiment to garrison Prevesa, a French corps to occupy Volo, had been considered, but for reasons, chiefly those of concentration of troops, these schemes of Lord John Russell's had been abandoned. The Swedish proposals were considered "but the conditions of alliance appeared quite untenable, and the whole affair was so irregular and uncertain, as to furnish no ground for any specific action at present."

The Queen in her answer said the decisions of the Cabinet gave her *sincere* satisfaction.

The correspondence of the following month chiefly concerned the proposed division of the War and Colonial Departments. In April Lord John Russell had drawn up a memorandum on the appointment of the Minister of War. In it he pressed the defective working of the present system and urged that the control of the Minister of War should be made more complete, so that rapidity and unity of action might become more possible. In his argument, he thought the whole of the colonies should be withdrawn from the War Department, for the load of business would be too great for any man unless this was done. At the end of April the Prime Minister was corresponding with the Queen concerning the vacant blue ribbon. Lord Aberdeen put before Her Majesty the reasons "which would induce Lord Aberdeen at this time to prefer the Duke of Newcastle. His high rank gives him a natural claim to the honour, and his official exertions have been very great. There has been some disposition most unjustly to find fault with him; and the proposal made by Lord John to deprive him of some of the duties of the Colonial Office, renders it desirable to show the Duke some mark of confidence."

Any belief that injustice towards, or lack of

confidence in anyone whom Lord Aberdeen believed worthy of trust, always made him slow to effect any change which might injure anyone wrongfully. The changes so strongly urged by Lord John Russell were not effected, and in the beginning of May Lord John wrote again with more excuse than usual for his ordinary petulance :

I do not find that you mentioned to the Cabinet the proposed plan for the division of the War and Colonial Departments. I do not know how to answer Mr. Rich to-night. It is impossible for me to defend the present system, and equally impossible for me to say, as the organ of the Government, that a better will be adopted. Had I full confidence in the administration of which you are the head, I should not scruple to take office under you. (Lord Aberdeen had offered one of the two divided offices to Lord John Russell.) But the late meetings of the Cabinet have shown so much indecision, and there is so great a reluctance to adopt those measures which would force the Emperor of Russia to consent to a speedy peace, that I can feel no such confidence. Indeed, the sooner I can be relieved of my share of the responsibility the better.

The correspondence between Lord John and the Prime Minister continued its difficult course. A compromise was effected which did not strengthen the administration of the war. Lord John became President of the Council, and Sir George Grey joined the Cabinet. Lord John Russell's biographer says :

In deference, however, to the scruples of the Prime Minister, and perhaps to objections in other quarters, the military offices, nominally placed under the Secretary of State, were neither consolidated nor reorganised, and the full advantages which Lord John had desired to secure were not attained.

*June 8th.* The Queen wishes to assure Lord Aberdeen that he will find her anxious to make no difficulties as to the filling of the different offices, but that with regard to the proposal for the creation of a fourth Secretary of State, she must refer Lord Aberdeen to her letter of the 29th ultimo, in which she laid down what she conceives to be her duty with regard to this important subject.

*May 13th.* The Queen has again to complain of the neglect about the drafts, a whole box having been *again* sent to her last night, without having been submitted "for approval," which she sends to Lord Aberdeen that he may remind Lord Clarendon of it, as the Queen does not wish this to continue, and which never was the case (unless Lord Clarendon specially explained the cause of their not being sent) till within the last two months. Amongst others, there is one which the Queen is *shocked* at, for it is neither more nor less than suspecting her *aunt*, the Duchess of Kent's eldest sister, of promoting intrigues in Italy, under the name of Mazzini, and ordering her to be watched! The Grand Duchess is very likely in correspondence with the Imperial family to which she belongs, but she lives entirely in retirement near Geneva, and has, as far as the Queen knows, never been a politician all her life, and not likely to make her debut now, in her seventy-third year, and in company with Mazzini!

Arthur Gordon, now acting as his father's private secretary, wrote to him from Paris :

THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Hotel Brighton, Paris, May 19, 1854.*

I called on M. Guizot this morning, by appointment, and had with him a very interesting, perhaps an important conversation.



After talking of your health, the position of your Government in Parliament, and your position in the Government, he entered upon the subject of the war, and asked upon what you founded your hopes of ever arriving at its conclusion.

I said that your hopes were by no means sanguine, and appeared to be the result of your great wish for peace rather than of any very definite calculations. He then enquired what line of conduct you would pursue.

1. If, after the English and French forces shall have gained some signal success, the Emperor Nicholas should propose a general Congress to consider terms of pacification?

2. If things remaining in their present condition without any decisive action, the Emperor Nicholas were to declare that he would agree to any such proposal of a congress if made to him. And the Emperor Napoleon were to express his opinion in favour of it?

3. If, on the Emperor Nicholas having declared himself as above, the Emperor Napoleon were to refuse to enter into the negotiation?

Taking great pains to assure him that I had no authority for what I said, and that I only spoke my own private opinion, I told him I thought, so far as I was able to judge, that, in the first case, you would unhesitatingly accept the proposal, (provided the evacuation of the principalities was understood to be an essential condition to entering on negotiation) and that you would be able to carry the Government with you, and would either have to retire or yield to the opinion of your colleagues. "Well," said he, "what I most desire for your father is that he should have the glory and the happiness of restoring peace; failing that, I should desire his retreat, his honourable

retreat, from the conduct of a war with which he himself in his letter to me says he has been *entraîné*, 'Si je le connais c'est ce qu'il désire lui même,' and I believe I can point out means of securing one of these 'bien faits,' the public one of peace for Europe, or the private one of a retreat for himself.

"The Emperor Nicholas will I *think*, I might almost say I *know*, consent to evacuate the Principalities forthwith, and to assist at a general congress subsequently, and I *believe* the Emperor Napoleon would support the idea, for the war, never popular, is daily becoming more unpalatable in this country and our master's strange despotism cannot long go contrary to the popular will, which, it is, after all, obliged to consult—moreover he is *two* men. The 'man of destiny' and the man of pleasure. The man of destiny is ambitious, dreamy, revolutionary, in a word an enthusiast; but the man of pleasure lives his present easy, voluptuous, expensive life and is somewhat lazy. In this struggle of characters, the man of pleasure will be the stronger. Should he however determine to persist in the war the proposal of the congress would afford an excellent escape for your father."

I ventured to suggest one or two difficulties—that the Emperor Nicholas had often said he would not allow his quarrels with Turkey to be meddled with by any other power; how could he now permit it? Ah! but now we have reached an European quarrel Turkey has disappeared. France and England reign in Constantinople, and it is they who are *en lutte* with Russia. The Emperor Nicholas will raise no such punctilio.

A very large party in England; not unrepresented in the Government, insist on a revision of existing treaties. Can the Emperor consent to allow such a

question to be raised, and such a system of treaties to be at once overthrown?

Not *before* the congress meets, but in the session, objections to them will arise, and be discussed, and they will be abandoned—you will see—the Emperor will consent to the Christians being placed under the protectorate of *all* Christian powers.

The Congress after all might fail—"Mais, Mon Dieu, non, *jamais, jamais.*" And, he rapidly counted up on his fingers a number of congresses. "No," he, said, "fighting is never renewed after a congress—great difficulties may arise—may seem insuperable—but they always are overcome." He ended a long conversation on this subject by saying "Your father *shall* make peace yet, or he shall leave it to others to continue the war. Come to me on Wednesday next, and I shall have an important communication to make to you."

I begged him to remember that the English Government would probably, I might say certainly, insist on the evacuation of the Principalities taking place before any negotiation was entered into. "*Ne faites pas cas de cela,*" dit il, "it will be done."

LORD ABERDEEN TO THE HON. ARTHUR GORDON

May 23, 1854.

On the whole, you answered Guizot's questions correctly; but I do not think the cases put are very likely to occur.

[After dealing with the likelihood of the three propositions:]

Certainly, there is nothing I should so much desire as to contribute to the restoration of peace, if it should be possible; but if not, I should scarcely less rejoice in an honourable and early retreat.

I agree with Guizot in thinking that if a Congress



should once be established, peace would be tolerably certain; for the more people had time to look closely at the real objects after the war, the more they would find their magnitude diminish.

The situation of the Emperor, however, is becoming extremely critical, and every day diminishes the chance of pacific overtures. These can only be made through the medium of Austria; and Austria is rapidly losing all vestige of the character of mediator, and is rapidly assuming that of direct hostility.

Should this once take place, the prospect of peace is removed to an immeasurable distance. It is clear that no time is to be lost.

Very extravagant notions are gaining ground here, which it will become more and more difficult to eradicate. The pressure of war may, no doubt, diminish their force; but it will be some time before this pressure is felt, and the commencement of actual hostilities, both in the Baltic and the Black Sea, greatly increases the warlike feelings of the people, and the unreasonableness of their expectations.

Parliament fully shares these feelings. The Government is by no means strong with respect to general measures; but in everything connected with the War, and in the most extravagant demands for meeting its expenses by any amount of taxation, we are always triumphant.

Gladstone's position last night, was by no means a good one, from which, even with his ability, he would have had some difficulty to extricate himself; but certainly, without the war mania he would never have obtained the great majority of 104.

The negotiations on the separation of the State Secretaryships dragged on through May and June. Mr. Gladstone writing to Mr. Gordon says, "I doubt if there is any man in England, except Lord Aberdeen,

who could have borne what he has had to bear during the last seventeen months."

The manner of the separation of offices and the Ministers who were to hold these offices was being pressed upon Lord Aberdeen by Lord John with peremptory querulousness. His own natural hesitation to make far-reaching changes after war had been declared, and his scrupulous fairness to his colleagues, was reinforced by the Queen's view. On May 29, she acknowledges a letter from the Prime Minister "from which she is sorry to see that the question of the Army Administration is again to be discussed in Parliament, and hopes Lord John Russell will be very *careful* in what he will say in reply. As long as the condemnation of the present system is confined to the efforts of the press and the Opposition, the evil is not irremediable; but anything said by the Government has a different effect." After stating the Queen's belief that the public had no strong feeling on the subject, she adds :

The House of Commons must applaud and support any design which will tend further to weaken the prerogatives of the Crown, and to place *exclusive* power in its own hands. For this, in the end, is the object of those who advocate the reform, and Lord Grey stated it quite plainly, that what was wanted was to bring the army completely under Parliamentary control.

Now this may be a good or a bad arrangement, according to the political views of different public men, but it will be a serious alteration in the balance of the constitution.

All the Queen can do is to promise that she will give any well-digested scheme her best consideration, but expects it to be proved that there are great evils to be rectified; that the proposed remedies will really effect this, and will not produce others which will be

equally great and injurious to the country. In the meantime, she has a right to ask that the Government will do nothing which will prejudice the question, and interfere with this *free* consideration which the Queen is ready to give to the subject when brought before her.

On May 30 Lord Aberdeen wrote to Lord John :

I trust the Queen will be satisfied with the proposed division of the duties of the Colonial Office, and that this arrangement may be the means of preventing any changes for the present at least, in the general administration of the Army. I saw the Duke of Newcastle after receiving your letter, and obtained his full concurrence in the proposed change. With respect to the personal part of the affair, and the different projects you have indicated, I think it would be unjust to the Duke, under present circumstances, to remove him from the War Department.

In a memorandum drawn up by Lord Aberdeen for the use of his colleagues, he says :

As the business of the Secretary for War has always formed a distinct Department of the Colonial Office, there can be no difficulty in placing it under a separate head. But this business is incidentally connected with the functions of the Colonial Secretary; and it will probably be necessary to place the military colonies under the entire control of the Secretary for War. This is most urgent with respect to Gibraltar, Malta and the Ionian Islands, all of which may be affected by the operations of the war.

Lord Palmerston's memorandum on that of Lord Aberdeen was short.



The manner in which both and all sides of the House received the question put to Lord John on this subject, showed that the House of Commons has decided the matter, and that a separation of the War and Colonial functions has become at least a Parliamentary necessity.

The action of the House of Commons quickened the decisions of the Cabinet. On the last day of May the Prime Minister wrote to Lord John that he had seen the Duke of Newcastle and obtained his full concurrence in the proposed change. Lord Aberdeen thought it would be "unjust to the Duke under present circumstances, to remove him from the War Department." That Sir George Grey should take the Colonies, Lord Aberdeen said was agreeable to himself, if Lord John would not revert to his "original intention" and take that department himself. "The fact of the division of the office, I consider as being now finally settled."

Lord John replied that Sir George Grey was willing to accept office, provided Lord John accepted office. "Before I accept office I must have it understood that the Cabinet will in future be more ready, or rather I should say more pressed, to clinch matters of urgent importance than it has hitherto been."

In the meantime the Queen had a not new complaint to make concerning the Foreign Office.

*April 27.* The Queen hopes Lord Aberdeen has spoken about the Foreign Office drafts. It is only within five or six weeks that she has observed the omission she complained of; hitherto they have been sent most regularly.

Though the Queen cannot send Lord Aberdeen *a card* for a child's ball, perhaps he may not disdain coming for a short while to see a number of happy little people, including some of his grandchildren enjoying themselves."

The month of July was occupied by the difficulties in the House of Commons. On the 14th Lord John wrote asking to be relieved of the leadership, and giving as his reason "the general want of confidence which prevails among the Liberal party." To this, Lord Aberdeen replied the same day that he had been "surprised and distressed at receiving your letter, and trust that a little reflection may enable you to take a different view of the course which it will be best for you to pursue."

The Queen was on the eve of leaving for Osborne, and she expressed a hope that her distance from town should not deprive her of personal communication with the Ministers, particularly Lord Aberdeen himself, the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord Clarendon. The Queen suggested that one of these Ministers should come to Osborne once a week.

Lord Aberdeen advised the Queen that the party meeting to be held that day by Lord John Russell was likely to cause a good deal of adverse discussion. He thought a hostile vote possible in the Commons, and in such a case it would obviously be necessary that the Government should take some very decided step. What that step might be, he indicated, that had he foreseen Lord John's action he would have suggested that the Queen should postpone her departure for another day.

The Queen replied she had fully considered the contents of Lord Aberdeen's letter. She had decided to make no change in her intended departure "from a conviction that her doing so might shake confidence in the result of this night's debate."

Lord Aberdeen duly reported to the Queen :

It is difficult to give any clear account of the meeting held to-day, which seems to have comprised every variety of opinion; but on the whole, the result appears to be favourable for the question to-night in the House of Commons. Many hostile speeches were made and much confusion prevailed.

The superior recommendations of Lord Palmerston for the War Department were stated by some members, but Lord Aberdeen is assured that the meeting was evidently not friendly to the suggestion.

If the vote to-night, as is likely, should be carried without difficulty, the great trial will be postponed until some day next week, when the Vote of Credit may be proposed. Lord John Russell announced his intention to propose this vote, and several members declared their resolution to oppose it. This is the most favourable issue for the Government which could be raised, as it is in fact a vote of confidence, in which many of the regular Opposition may be expected to join.

The Queen wrote from Osborne her great satisfaction at the Prime Minister's report. "We cannot but hope that everything will do equally well next week, and that will be much better ground."

The meeting called by Lord John Russell secured for the Government the separation of the office of Colonial Secretary from those of the duties of Secretary at War, and the way was cleared for the Vote of Credit.

The Prince Consort comments on the difficulties of a Government engaged in war to Baron Stockmar :

The aspect of politics is very singular. The Ministry here has had an explanation with its supporters at Lord John's house, in which their total disorganisation made itself apparent; these supporters have since made the most vehement attacks on particular Ministers, especially Aberdeen, brought forward a motion against the Government, and lost it without a division. A Vote of Credit of £3,000,000 for the Recess has become a vote of confidence for the Ministry. Aberdeen himself is in deep distress at the probable death of his eldest son, as well as the great



amount of injustice, not to *say* folly, on the part of the public. With them the steam is fairly up, as it ought to be in going to war, and Aberdeen is a standing reproach in their eyes, because he cannot share the enthusiasm while it is his part to lead it. Nevertheless, he does his duty, and keeps the whole thing together, and is the only guarantee that the war will not degenerate into crackbrained fruitless absurdities, which are certain to turn out solely for the advantage of Russia.

Lord John wrote his account to the Queen, who commented on it to Lord Aberdeen.

The Queen received a letter from Lord John Russell this morning, giving her an account of the meeting of the supporters of the Government, and concluding with the following observations: "Such a party as appeared yesterday in Downing Street form a strange basis for a Government to rest upon. But, at the present moment, it is doubtful whether any other Government would obtain more support than the present." To which the Queen has replied, "that such as it is we must make the best of it, and nothing will contribute more to keeping it together than to give it the impression that the Government is thoroughly united."

There was a temporary lull in the internal difficulties and on July 19 Lord Aberdeen reports to the Queen a Cabinet meeting from twelve to five o'clock.

This long sitting was chiefly occupied in the discussion of the answer which it may be proper to make to the Russian despatch addressed to Prince Gortchakoff at Vienna, in reply to the Austrian summons for the evacuation of the Principalities. The French Government had proposed a form of

Protocol, in which the Conference at Vienna should enumerate the principal conditions upon which the Allies would be prepared to treat for peace; at the same time, they pronounced the Russian answer to be evasive and inadmissible. It was determined, however, to suggest to the French Government whether it might not be preferable simply to declare the unsatisfactory nature of the Russian answer without entering into the consideration of the precise terms upon which peace might be made.

The intelligence from Vienna to-day is more favourable to the proposal of an adherence by Austria to her understanding with the Western Powers, and to her engagements with them and with the Porte.

It appears that Prussia has forbidden Count Arnim to take any part in a conference assembled for the purpose of considering the Russian answer; but Count Buol had declared his determination to persevere, even without the assent of the Prussian Government.

The attacks on the Government continued in the Commons, led by Disraeli, who saw enough of the dispirited condition of the front bench to make him eager to press every weak point. Once Lord Aberdeen was unwontedly moved. He wrote to Sir James Graham that he was about to go to Osborne, remaining there to-morrow.

I shall have a great deal to say to the Queen, and it will require a little time for me to recover my equanimity, after having been made the subject of repeated attack during a long debate, without a single syllable being said in defence. I should have no pleasure in meeting the Cabinet to-day at dinner.

Arthur Gordon wrote to and Mr. Gladstone replied on the absence of ministerial support.

*July 24.*

There is another reason besides the one you name for my not having defended Lord Aberdeen; it is this, that I am constantly supposed to be "tarred with the same stick," and that the comparatively few allusions made to me by Layard and others, in proportion to my smaller significance, are always made in that sense.

Sir James Graham answered in a manner which must have appealed more to the Prime Minister's sense of loyalty in his colleagues.

If you think that I have not been true to you, or have failed in any one duty, on any one occasion, as a colleague or as a friend, I am sure that the error is mine, for you are just and forbearing and I regret the error from my heart. Since the death of Peel I have regarded you as my most faithful and familiar friend, and I have endeavoured always to act in conformity with these feelings.

I was quite ready to have spoken on Monday night, but the brunt of the attack fell on Lord John himself, in consequence of an imprudence, and, not knowing what had taken place in the House of Lords, I found I might do more harm than good in critical circumstances.

Lord Aberdeen's answer from Osborne showed he had recovered his usual serenity :

You may be assured that I blame no one except myself. I ought to have acquired sufficient philosophy to meet an occurrence like that of Monday without repining. Believe me, I am fully sensible of your friendship, upon which I have always felt that I could securely reckon; and you must undoubtedly have seen that my confidence knew no bounds. There is no change,



let us, therefore, be satisfied, and turn to other matters.

Some time ago I recollect hearing you express yourself in strong terms respecting the attractions possessed by Cowes Castle, as a residence. The Queen has, to-day placed it at my disposal, and my first wish is to offer it to you. Should you be able to accept it, and retain the same feelings about it, I can only say that among the few agreeable things which relieve the intolerable irksomeness of my present position this would be one.

Sir James Graham declined the offer, thinking that a distinguished military officer was still best entitled to enjoy the benefit of this appointment.

“The proof of your friendship in offering it to me is a great satisfaction.”

At the close of July the Queen wrote from Osborne :

We are very desirous of standing sponsors to Mrs. Gordon's little girl; first of all because she is Lord Aberdeen's granddaughter<sup>1</sup>; and second because her father was so long connected with our household. We trust that this offer will not be unacceptable to Lord Aberdeen and Mrs. Gordon.

On the last day of July the Queen wrote on another matter, one which was to make the Crimean War the last that would be waged without the greatest of the alleviations discovered by science.

The Queen wishes to ask Lord Aberdeen whether he does not think that Dr. Simpson should receive a mark of distinction. He is the real discoverer of chloroform, for which the whole of humanity owe him a debt of gratitude which can *never be repaid*, and, is besides a very clever man, always trying some new

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs. Victor Marshall of Coniston, Cumberland.

experiment to save life and relieve suffering, and the Queen thinks that he well deserves knighthood.

On August 5 Lord Aberdeen wrote that the business of the Session would be ended that week and that the prorogation might take place on Saturday. In a letter written to the Queen the day before, he summed up the position of the Government :

The failures in the House of Commons have been numerous, but Lord Aberdeen is bound to say that the Government have no reason to complain of want of support in the House of Lords.

The close of the Session brought him little relief. His family affairs had in the last year pressed heavily upon him. Lord Haddo had been for some time alarmingly ill, and had been told by the doctors that his recovery must not be expected. Lord Aberdeen's second son was fighting with his regiment in the Crimea, and announced the victory of the Alma and his own safety in a letter to his father.

Alex (writes Lord Aberdeen to Lady Haddo) has been mercifully preserved at the dreadful battle of the 5th Nov. It seems to have been the most desperate and bloody upon record. Our loss of generals and of men is frightful, but the victory was complete. Alex had the horse given him by the Prince shot under him. The situation of our army is critical, but we are sending ample reinforcements.

The Queen had written desiring Lord Aberdeen's attendance at Osborne, and Lord Aberdeen wrote with unusual unreserve to the Sovereign, of the distressing situation in which he was placed.

Your Majesty has already been generally made aware of the very serious illness of Lord Haddo. Although without any pulmonary affection, it appears

to be the advice of physicians that he should go abroad, and especially try the climate of Egypt during the winter. Lord Aberdeen has been led to hope that a passage may be granted on board the yacht of the Viceroy, now about to return to Alexandria. Should this be the case, it will be necessary for Lord and Lady Haddo to be at Southampton for embarkation on the 9th September.

Humanly speaking, Lord Aberdeen can never expect to see his son again, and although he has never slept out of London, he has contrived, since the prorogation of Parliament, to go down to Blackheath for two or three hours every day. Your Majesty may easily imagine the situation of poor Lady Haddo with her children. Lord Aberdeen can be of little use or assistance; but his love and admiration are inexpressibly increased by seeing the tenderness, devotion and fortitude which it is possible for a woman in such a situation to exhibit.

The Queen's answer was prompt and full of understanding.

The Queen has this morning received Lord Aberdeen's kind and sad letter. He knows well the sincere friendship, indeed she ought to say affection, we both have for him, therefore Lord Aberdeen will easily believe how deeply grieved we are to see the distress and anxiety he is suffering from on account of his son, in addition to all the cares and troubles of his responsible position. We would not for the world wish to deprive himself from being as much with Lord and Lady Haddo before their departure for the East, as possible. The climate of Egypt is so beneficial to invalids that we cannot help hoping that Lord Aberdeen may have the comfort of seeing Lord Haddo's health improve.



The Queen's hope was more than justified. Lord Haddo rallied in a manner surprising to all concerned.

Writing to Lady Haddo, Lord Aberdeen reports on the new steam vessel :

Before I left Southampton I went on board the Egyptian ship, which is now out of dock. Much as I had heard of her, and much as I expected, I was not at all prepared for anything so perfect as she is. Her size is immense, being 2400 tons; the height between decks is so great, that the ship is perfectly airy, and there is not a vestige of that peculiar smell, which generally belongs to all ships.

The cabins are excellent, and as convenient as possible. The most magnificent are near the stern; but I imagine you would prefer those towards the centre of the ship, where there is the least motion. But, to see such an enormous machine, it is difficult to suppose that there should ever be much motion.

The Government were having a troubled time in the House of Commons. Disraeli led all the forces of opposition against the Government, and Lord John found his party constantly in the minority. It did not help his own dissatisfaction with almost everything that the Cabinet decided upon. Before the end of the Session he was again writing to Lord Aberdeen that he wished to be relieved from the duties of leader in the House of Commons. He gave as his reason "the frequent defeats we have sustained, the number of measures we have been forced to withdraw, and the general want of confidence which prevails among the Liberal party."

Lord John concluded: "You have been on the other hand, successful in the House of Lords. The weakness of the Government lies in the House of Commons, and a change of leaders may remedy the defect." Lord Aberdeen expressed his usual surprise

and distress at this resolution, and hoped, not without previous experiences, that a little reflection would alter Lord John's determination. Lord Aberdeen had had proof how far he himself was successful in the House of Lords. On June 23 Lord John had sent him a paper, and with it he wrote: "It is right you should know what is going on. The position of the Government has become very precarious." The paper was addressed to the Lord Mayor of London by certain undersigned inhabitants of London. They said they had read with indignant surprise and deep regrets the imprudent speech of the Earl of Aberdeen in the House of Lords on the 19th of June relative to the war with Russia. The signatories expressed gratification at the manly and truly British declarations made by Lord John and the Earl of Clarendon:

To the end that no encouragement may be held out to the Emperor of Russia to hope that it may at any time be in his option to accept the *status quo ante bellum*, to which the unstatesmanlike views of the Premier might lead him; and that he may labour under no mistake in reference to the resolute determination of the British people to exact from him ample retribution for the outrage he has dared to commit upon the rights of nations and the peace of Europe, and the most effectual material guarantees against a recurrence of his unprincipled attempts to aggrandise himself by unprovoked aggression upon inoffensive neighbouring kingdoms, and to embroil the nations of Europe in dissension. We respectfully request that you will preside at a meeting in the Guildhall, for the purpose of giving public and marked emphasis to the determination of the country never to make peace with Russia.

The occasion for this document, so illustrative of the temper of the country, was a debate in the House

of Lords, and Lord Stanmore describes the feelings which prompted the speech of the Prime Minister :

Lord Aberdeen's abhorrence of exaggeration, his inability to simulate passionate resentment which he did not feel, or apprehensions which he did not share, and his determination to confine the war to its original objects, not unnaturally produced an impression of half-heartedness in its prosecution, which rendered him highly unpopular. A nation at war is not disposed to regard the case of its opponent judicially or dispassionately, and the Emperor Nicholas was for the moment regarded by the British public with as much alarm and hatred as had ever been the case with Bonaparte himself. Lord Aberdeen considered the Russian pretensions inadmissible, and the cause of Turkey just; but he had no apprehensions of Russia as a European power, and no sympathy with those who would have undertaken a crusade for her destruction. When, therefore, Lord Lyndhurst, in the House of Lords, pronounced a vehement philippic against the Czar, and made an impassioned appeal to his hearers on behalf of the liberties of Europe, threatened by the encroachments of Russia, Lord Aberdeen, in replying to him, expressed his exact thoughts and opinions with the most transparent openness. Read now, his speech would probably appear to most men unexceptionable. His sentiments were in fact those of more than one of his colleagues, but their avowal raised a storm of obloquy which he had some difficulty in fully understanding. That the conduct of the Russian Government should be impartially considered was not to be borne; and it was not unnaturally supposed that Lord Aberdeen, feeling no strong animosity against Russia, and anxious to restore peace, would shrink from prosecuting the war with decision and vigour.



The incident closed with a letter from the Queen :

*Buckingham Palace, June 26, 1854.*

The Queen is very glad to hear that Lord Aberdeen will take an opportunity of dispelling misapprehensions which have arisen in the public mind in consequence of his last speech in the House of Lords, and the effect of which has given the Queen great uneasiness. She knows Lord Aberdeen *so well*, that she can *fully* enter into his feeling and understand what he means; but the public—particularly under strong excitement of patriotic feelings, is impatient and annoyed to hear, at this moment, the First Minister of the Crown enter into an *impartial* examination of the Emperor of Russia's conduct. The qualities in Lord Aberdeen's character which the Queen values most highly, his candour and his courage in expressing opinions, even if opposed to general feelings of the moment, are, in this instance, dangerous to him; and the Queen hopes that in the vindication of his own conduct to-day,—which ought to be *triumphant*, as it wants, in fact, *no* vindication,—he will not undertake the ungrateful and injurious task of vindicating the Emperor of Russia from any of the exaggerated charges brought against him and his policy, at a time when there is enough in it to make us fight with all our might against it.

Lord Clarendon, writing at the same date, says :

It seems to me of great importance to establish the difference which exists between the time when the Turks were ready for peace sake to renew former Treaties, and to forego even indemnity for the war, and the present time, when the Emperor of Russia has rejected all offers of conciliation, and declared that he will have his own way in Turkey, even at the cost of plunging all Europe in war.

As far as I can make out, the sum-total of objections to your speech is that it jarred against public opinion, which is now running breast-high against Nicholas.

You were thought to defend him, or to offer some palliation for his conduct; and people won't inquire whether facts bear you out. You will, of course, not pander to what you may think a popular delusion; but it is not safe, and can answer no good end, to damp the excitement under which great sacrifices are being made, and more will be required.

*June 27, 1854.*

The Queen hastens to thank Lord Aberdeen for his kind letter received last night, and to congratulate him upon his triumphant refutation of the wicked misrepresentations of his opinions and views. We have read his speech with the greatest interest and satisfaction, and feel sure that it will have the best effect on the public.

#### THE KING OF THE BELGIANS TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Lacken, June 30, 1854.*

Though I have been purposely silent a long time, I must break through my habits to congratulate you with all my heart on your well-merited success in the House of Lords. You have honestly and courageously told the real state of the question, and I see with the utmost satisfaction that your speech has made an excellent impression. What England has a perfect right to aim at you have clearly defined. Russia is a danger for the East, and having most imprudently brought matters to a crisis, it is natural for the Western Powers to diminish this danger. Russia is not a danger for the West of Europe. The young generation is quite astonished that our impressions of 1812 to 1815 are so strong, but well they may be, and it would be childish to overlook the dangers we have all very

near home. I am sorry to see nearly all countries discussing their affairs, as it were, in the streets. It takes the management of them out of the hands of those who ought to direct them, and gives to the passions of the moment an undue influence, as they are so easily misled.

Mr. Gladstone, who had received from Arthur Gordon some communications on the episode, says :

When we come to discussion either among ourselves or elsewhere, it must and will come out who it is that has brought the Government into difficulty, and into increasing weakness and discredit.

He closes his letter with a tribute to the "extraordinary nature and amount of the demands that have been made upon Lord Aberdeen's patience, kindness, and admirable self-control."

#### MEMORANDUM OF LORD ABERDEEN

*June 1854.*

Having read the Memoranda made by members of the Cabinet, there appears to be very little difference of opinion. All agree in thinking that the destruction of Sebastopol and the Russian fleet ought to be the great object in view; and that this should be attempted as soon as possible.

I agree in this opinion; but I should not have done so if the siege of Silistria had not been raised, and if Omar Pasha had still required our support on the Danube. This, happily, appears not to be the case; and there can be no doubt that it would be most desirable to make the attack upon Sebastopol with the least possible delay. We ought to be very careful, however, to do nothing to fetter the judgment of Lord Raglan, whom we ought to leave perfectly free to act according to his own opinion of the means at his disposal, compared with the difficulties to be overcome.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CRIMEAN WAR (1854)

“The personal turn which politics have taken since the break up of old Party divisions has led to very disgraceful results; and in no point more disgraceful than in the perpetual and malignant attacks upon you individually by those who intreated you to join them, when they found they could hardly do without you.”

ARGYLL TO ABERDEEN, 1854.

### LORD ABERDEEN TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

*Aug. 30, 1854.*

WE have been in great alarm at the effect which the prevalence of cholera might produce in the decision of our commanders in the East. The French never relished the expedition to Sebastopol and our own officers are not very sanguine. The loss of men in the French army has been very great, and we have also suffered considerably; but the whole mass is much dispirited, and broken down by disease. All the despatches, too, from Headquarters have been curiously silent on the subject. I trust now, however, that the last accounts prove the sincerity of the intention to embark, and that we may fairly hope the troops are at this time on the sea or landed.

I am very sanguine of success; and after the execution of our guns at Bomarsund, I fully expect the same result at Sebastopol. We shall then, indeed, make a great step towards peace.

I take for granted the fortifications of Bomarsund will be entirely destroyed and never rebuilt. In that case, it matters little who holds the Aland Islands.

The Russian reply has not yet been received at Vienna. I rather expect that it will be favourable, very much to the disappointment and disgust of those who delight in war.

We shall have a great harvest in Scotland, as has already been the case in England. This is equal to a victory, although not quite to the destruction of Sebastopol and the capture of the fleet.

The autumn had been unhealthy at home and abroad. Both the French and English armies were stricken with cholera. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke to Lord Aberdeen as to a form of prayer to be used in consequence of the prevalence of this disease. Lord Aberdeen put the matter before the Queen, saying that whenever Her Majesty desired such a special form, it would be necessary to hold a Council for the purpose. The Queen's answer was on a line she had taken before :

She strongly objects to these special prayers, which are, in fact, not a sign of gratitude to, or confidence in, the Almighty; for if this is to be the course to be pursued, we ought to have one for every illness, and certainly, in 1837, the influenza was notoriously more fatal than the cholera has ever been, yet no one would have thought of having a prayer against that.

The Queen proceeded to ask what was the use of the Liturgical prayers if new ones had to be framed for special outbreaks of disease. The Queen noted how cholera had quite decimated Newcastle, in the previous year. No proposal had been made for special prayers till cholera had appeared in London. "The Queen cannot see the difference between the one and the other."

Lord Aberdeen concurred entirely with the Queen's judgment and added :

He prevented the Archbishop from pressing for the adoption of a new prayer, on the occasion of the war,

instead of that prescribed by the Liturgy; and he trusts that, in the present visitation, the usual prayer will also be preserved.

September was full of the thoughts of the investment of Sebastopol. Lord John, writing on the 11th, says :

I agree with you in thinking that Sebastopol ought to fall. I reckon more, however, on the effects of bombardment, than on the operations of a regular siege. You may hear of the landing at the end of this week, or the beginning of next, but from that time forward the news will be so interesting that you will hardly get away from London. If Sebastopol is taken the Garter should go to Raglan.

On the same day Lord Aberdeen wrote again to the Queen on the propriety of appointing a special prayer and thanksgiving for the abundant harvest.

He is aware that Your Majesty on principle does not approve of having recourse to special intercession, and he humbly ventures to express his entire concurrence in this opinion; but as the blessing actually received is so inestimably great, especially at such a crisis, he humbly thinks that it would be desirable that Your Majesty should be pleased to direct a form of prayer and thanksgiving to be prepared for the purpose of meeting the general expectation on the subject.

The Queen answered :

A prayer of the kind proposed she objects less to than any other.

On the 14th Lord Clarendon writes :

The expedition, thank Heaven has sailed from Varna. I am for keeping Sebastopol (*if we get it*) during the



winter, for various reasons; but Newcastle and Graham told me yesterday that you are a decided demolitionist. We ought to come to a decision upon the subject.

I have written an official letter of thanks to the Viceroy for the obliging manner in which the Egyptian frigate was placed at the disposal of Lord Haddo.

Col. Alexander Gordon, Lord Aberdeen's second son, had sailed with the expeditionary force, and kept his father fully informed of passing events. He was recommended for gallant service in the field. Colonel Alexander in March 1855 reported himself as "a Russian at heart and thoroughly despise the filthy Turks for whom we are endeavouring to uphold the Crescent against the Cross. We have no more chance of taking Sebastopol than the navy have of taking Cronstadt and are further from it than ever."

In October, writing from "Before Sebastopol":

The batteries opened yesterday morning from both French and English attacks, but about 9 a.m. the French fire entirely ceased owing to a terrible explosion in the centre of their batteries. This is most unfortunate as the principal part of the Russian fire is now directed upon us and our work of yesterday and to-day will be almost lost. The naval attack yesterday was a complete failure. They could make no impression on the Russian batteries. Some lay the blame on Admiral Dundas for not going nearer than 1500 yards. He might just as well have remained 15 miles off. The Russians worked their guns yesterday very well—and when the naval attack began the fire on us did not slacken in the least.

The navy have only 70 rounds per gun—how is this? Surely Admiral Dundas should be called to account for not having enough for the service on which he is engaged. The sailors on shore do very

well. I have been made the Assistant Quarter Master General at H.Q. I am highly pleased at the appointment and like the duties very much. It is also gratifying to have been appointed in the field and not from interest at the Horse Guards.

The "Weak Front" of Sebastopol turns out to be a very respectable one.

Nov. 8, 1854.

You will have heard that we have had another terrible battle in which we were at length victorious but with a loss which we can ill afford. Owing to the mercy of God I again escaped unhurt, although my horse was shot under me. The battle lasted for nine hours, and hard fighting most of the time. You need not expect to hear of the fall of Sebastopol this winter, the utmost we can do will be to protect ourselves in our present position, and we shall be very fortunate if we succeed in doing this. We have 125,000 Russians before us now, divided into three bodies, and this number will shortly be increased to 200,000 by the constant arrival of troops from the North and Odessa—owing to the inactivity of the Austrians.

I hope you were not an advocate of this expedition, although of course you must have sanctioned it.

You must prepare another army to carry on the war next spring, for I do not think you will get much out of this, or rather what will be left of it by that time.

You should immediately order several hundred waggons for the conveyance of ammunition and commissariat supplies in the next campaign. Do not lose time about settling the pattern but copy the French, which is excellent. Their army has a great advantage over ours in not being dependent upon the wretched carriages picked up in the country which are always breaking down. Every corps d'armée has a complete equipment of military transport.

Nov. 13.

We have had rain, very heavy, for some time and the roads are breaking up, being nothing but earth. This interferes with our transport, both of ammunition and food very seriously.

Unless you send out 10, or 12,000 men, Militia or anything, immediately we shall not be able to keep our position here through the winter. You should also send out directly several ship loads of hay for the horses are fast dying of starvation and cold. It is a great misfortune that our supplies of winter clothing were not sent out sooner. The men want them very much; having nothing but what they had during the hot summer months, and their clothes are almost worn out.

Although I hope it will not be necessary, yet you need not be surprised to hear by any post that we have raised the siege and fallen back upon Balaclava.

*Before Sebastopol, Nov. 17, 1854.*

We have suffered a good deal from a hurricane which sank several vessels laden with stores, and ammunition and it has done great damage to our tents and effects on shore. The rain has also made the roads in such a state that we have had great difficulty in getting up our supplies of food and ammunition. All this does not tend to diminish the critical position of the army.

Sir De Lacy Evans is going home, being broken down by age and inability to stand the fatigue and cold of a winter campaign. His parting advice to Lord Raglan was "My Lord, save your army and raise the siege." I believe the same advice would be given by every general and officer of experience in this army, if *his opinion were asked*.



## LORD ABERDEEN TO LORD CLARENDON

Sept. 5, 1856.

I hope we may shortly have authentic intelligence of the actual sailing of the expedition. These reports are very tantalising. If they sail, my conviction is that they must succeed, and promptly too. Any alternative would be too dreadful to think of.

On September 17 from Balmoral the Prince Consort wrote to Lord Aberdeen. In reporting their arrival he urged him not to remain longer in London.

The news from Sebastopol cannot come so fast as one fancies, and for any decision to be taken with respect to what may pass, that may be done from here as well as from London. There remains, then, the only argument for your staying, that you would be abused for coming away. This is very likely, as abusing you is the trade of a large portion of the political public; but they will take any other ground, perhaps the very fact of your staying—in order to misrepresent the motives for it. As there is nothing real in it, however, it can do no harm.

On September 22 the Queen added her injunctions.

The good news of the landing of the troops in the Crimea will have given Lord Aberdeen sincere pleasure. The Queen must now urge very strongly on Lord Aberdeen the necessity for his health of his coming at once to Scotland; the siege of Sebastopol may be long, and when Sebastopol is *once taken* the difficulties respecting what is to be done with it will arise, and then Lord Aberdeen's presence will be necessary in town. The Queen must almost insist on his coming speedily north, where he will in a short time, take in a stock of health which will carry him well through the next winter and session.

In a following letter, the Queen concluded :

Lord Aberdeen knows that his health is not his own alone, but that she and the country have as much interest in it as he and his own family.

Lord Aberdeen, after remaining a short time at Balmoral, went on to Haddo, where he had told the Queen he had much private business which urgently required his attention. He was at Haddo when the news reached him of the battle of the Alma. The original telegraph form is still amongst the Aberdeen papers. The message was received at Perth, and was sent on by special messenger to Balmoral and Haddo.

*Sunday, Oct. 1.*—Lord Raglan reports though without date the storming yesterday of the heights of the Alma. The position was formidable and defended by numerous heavy guns. British loss considerable, but no general wounded. Enemy supposed to have had from forty-five to fifty thousand infantry. Some prisoners, including two generals and two guns, were captured by the British Army. Nothing could exceed the bravery and good conduct of the troops. This news left Constantinople the 24th Sep.

Lord Aberdeen wrote on the same date to Lord Clarendon :

This morning the telegraph has brought the account of the action of the Alma, and the report of the fall of Sebastopol. The first must be correct, the latter may be so. This great intelligence absorbs everything else, and, for the present, deprives the other matters to which you refer of their interest and importance.

My first impression respecting the fate of the fortifications at Sebastopol was that they should be entirely destroyed, without delay. No doubt the security of the Turks would be obtained by the destruction of the sea defences; but I see no good reason for doing the thing by halves.

#### TO THE QUEEN

Lord Aberdeen humbly presumes to offer his most cordial congratulations to Your Majesty on the great intelligence received. The account sent by Lord Stratford of the victory on the Alma must be correct; the report mentioned by Mr. Colquhoun may possibly be so too. At all events, we may fairly hope that the fall of Sebastopol cannot long be delayed.

After discussing at some length the fate of the Crimea if Sebastopol were taken Lord Aberdeen concludes :

The present war, wisely or unwisely, has been entered into exclusively on the ground of an European interest, and not in consequence of any obligation or Treaty binding Your Majesty to adopt such a course. It would be a fatal policy not redeemed by the greatest success, if the war should leave this country more fettered by guarantees and engagements at its termination than existed at its commencement. For this reason he is reluctant to contract fresh obligations, and is most anxious to preserve entire freedom of action and judgment at the moment of pacific negotiations.

The Queen on the following day replied she entirely agreed in the "statesmanlike views" he had expressed. That Sebastopol should have fallen so soon the Queen said she hardly ventured to credit, but, she



with others believed its fall was imminent. The short letter ended on a note never long absent from her thought—"She grieves over the *loss* we have sustained, and feels that many must be in terrible anxiety until they know who are amongst the fallen."

On October 3 Lord Aberdeen wrote to Lord Clarendon. "The Turkish Ambassador has sent a dispatch which exceeds the bounds of credibility."

How far the Government were from knowing the state of affairs in the Crimea can be gathered from the conclusion of the letter. "He presumes on the complete destruction of the works of Sebastopol," and concludes: "The intention of wintering in the Crimea may, perhaps, be right; but this, too, I would leave to the decision of the Generals, and not decide too hastily. With Sebastopol entirely razed, and the fleet captured, I would not give sixpence for the possession of the Crimea in any political view."

Lord John, who was concerned about a bit of Whig patronage among the Lord Lieutenants in Scotland, notes the victory of the Alma in the concluding sentence of a letter on a subject he considered more important than the war—"I hope the fall of Sebastopol is a fact, but I doubt it. However, I think, after our victory, it must fall soon."

To him, Lord Aberdeen replied that the Lord Lieutenant in question was not yet dead. "Your Scotch Whig friends are, as usual, wonderfully active. They are like the Emperor of Russia and the 'sick man.'" Lord Aberdeen said that he did believe Sebastopol had fallen, and if not true it could only be premature. He told Lord John the Cabinet would have to meet about the middle of October, and presumed by then Lord John would have returned from Filey, as he would from Haddo. He wrote Lord Clarendon a long despatch on the question of sending French and English Commissioners into the Principalities. The proposal, he thought:

Rested upon insufficient grounds, and may possibly lead to much mischief. The agreement already

entered into to place the Principalities under European protection will be difficult enough to carry into effect, without the chance of serious differences; but in the present state of affairs to bring the great Powers into the active administration of these provinces will only be the means of anticipating future quarrels.

Had we, in the first instance, established a sort of European concert in the provinces on the retreat of the Russians, it might perhaps have been done without offence; but I do not see how this is now possible, nor do I know very well on what grounds it is now demanded. Austria fully admits European control in the future condition of the Principalities. The present occupation is temporary, and the presence of a numerous army may render many things necessary which would be very objectionable at another time.

On October 5 the Government were still without any certain news. Lord Aberdeen, writing to the Queen, repeats his inclination to believe the reported fall of the fortress, in spite of the absurdly exaggerated reports of the Turkish accounts. "Lord Aberdeen well recollects that, at the time of the battle of Austerlitz, the country was in ecstasy for three or four days at the report of a great victory gained over the French, the truth of which was so fatally contradicted."

Lord Aberdeen had decided to make a speech in Aberdeen, and had communicated to Graham some of the things he had intended to say, not only about the war, but also notice the personal attacks on himself and his administration. He asked Sir James his opinion on his proposed speech, and his answer is worth recording at this point of the history. Sir James begins by saying :

There is always some objection to first ministers making speeches out of Parliament; every word

which falls from them carries great weight, it is certain to be misrepresented, and there is no opportunity either of explanation or of reply. . . . If the First Minister of the Crown makes his appearance before his countrymen on an occasion like this, scurrilous attacks and base imputations must not be uppermost in his thoughts; the honour of the country which he governs, and the glory of the arms which he has directed to victory, throw all such spectres into darkness, and must nobly and fully occupy his mind.

Facts are far better than words in refuting calumnies; and if words were wanting, in the very hall where you are to assemble, Hume, a few days ago, did you ample justice, and poured contempt on these very scandals; while Molesworth, the colleague least connected with you, bore honourable testimony to your services and merits. . . .

Just think what you have done ! Without boasting, you may recall it to the recollection of your hearers, and the nation more than shares all the merit of the triumph.

A year of high prices and of scarcity has just been closed, without a riot or the least interruption of public tranquillity; thanks, in some measure at all events, to that commercial policy which you have so firmly maintained, and now so successfully consummated. True to that policy, you did your utmost to avert the evils of war; but where peace could no longer be preserved with honour, how has that war been conducted? Six months have barely elapsed since it was declared, and we have closed the White Sea, the Baltic, and the Black Sea against even the appearance of the Russian Flag.

We have sent a larger army to a greater distance in a shorter time than ever before was transported



from the shores of England. The commercial navy has vied with the Queen's navy in performance of this service, and without their combined operation, and without this mercantile power, the achievement would have been impossible. All the new appliances of science and of art have been brought to bear on this great undertaking; and the power of England, which might have been doubted amidst the vicissitudes of fortune, or even supposed to have decayed, is exalted higher than ever; and her place among nations is secured.

The extravagance of poetry is realized; it is too much for the good citizens of Aberdeen. You have rounded the pillars of Hercules; you have navigated the *Ægean*; you have passed the *Simplegades*; you have touched the *Chersonese*; you have swept the *Crimea*; and all this has been accomplished in one short summer, while the British fleet at the same time offered battle to the Russians in the harbour of their northern capital, destroyed one of their strongholds in the *Baltic*, and visited their fastnesses within the *Arctic Sea*.

Here are topics for a song of triumph in which Sovereign and people, Ministers and Parliament, Provosts and Town Councils may cordially join, and in this loud and general acclaim the screeching of slanderers and the hissing of serpents will be drowned and soon forgotten.

But you do not stop here. Has nothing been done for the future peace of the world, and for the mitigation of the evils of war? In favour of commerce, you have admitted the rights of neutrals at the expense of some sacrifice of belligerent power. By an example which will be memorable, you have extinguished privateering; you have gone far to obliterate the ancient enmities of France and England

by showing them how to conquer side by side; and you have taught the nations of Europe that this Western Alliance is formidable when it has reason and justice on its side.

Has your diplomacy been unsuccessful? You have brought Austria into line, and have thereby secured the free passage of the Danube, and the northern frontier of Turkey; you have, moreover, obtained from Austria the recognition of the basis on which the peace of Europe is to be re-established.

You have gained the goodwill of Sweden by your moderation and forbearance; you have kept in check the disposition of Prussia to take part against you; and with the United States of America at this juncture, when Russia counted on embroiling you, you have concluded the settlement of an angry question which has been pending for forty years; and, I believe the Fishery Treaty is the first Reciprocity Treaty ever signed in America. *Pacem duello miscuit.*

So wrote Sir James Graham in all good faith, in the first flush of the news of the battle of the Alma, and the reported fall of the great fortress. It was a letter calculated to sustain the Prime Minister in the doubts that pressed from within, and the attacks from without.

It is an illuminating document, as it concerned the information obtainable for the Cabinet. It was written in early October, the Crimean winter, famous for the sufferings of its ill-found Army, was close at hand. Lord Clarendon's biographer records that as the month of October ran out: "Clarendon became despondent; he knew how ill provided the army was for a winter campaign; all his efforts to induce Austria and Prussia to take an active part had failed."

As he started for the Lord Mayor's banquet on November 9, Lord Clarendon wrote to his wife:

Do what I will, I can't help gloomy forebodings.

The Emperor L. N. offers to send 20,000 troops to reinforce if we will convey them. Graham sends me word we have not a vessel of any kind, and that all our stores and winter clothing are going out in sailing ships.

Graham wrote again on October 3. He had written to Lord John on the policy of a dissolution of Parliament, should the good news from the Crimea prove true. The Duke of Newcastle had also been communicated with, and he had told Sir James that during a visit to Minto Lord John had shown "fresh signs of discontent, and meditated the revival of personal projects tending to his own aggrandisement." Lord John had taken umbrage on "the studious withholding of important steps from his cognizance." Sir James ended, as was not unusual, that he had shown the letter to the Prince, "and he foresees, as I do, a coming storm."

The Queen wrote :

We live in a state of anxious and trying suspense at the delay of the arrival of official news of the fall of Sebastopol.

The Queen has received a letter from Lord Palmerston, asking for permission, at a convenient season, to go either to Boulogne or Paris, as the Emperor had so often repeated his invitation. She concludes it will no longer be possible to withhold this permission, much as this visit is to be deprecated.

Writing from Haddo, Lord Aberdeen thanks Sir James for both his letters.

I believe you are right, and that it will be better to reserve any personal matters of explanation for some opportunity in Parliament, should any such occur. In the meantime, you have furnished me with abundant topics upon which to address the citizens of Bon Accord.



This letter is dated October 6, and in it Lord Aberdeen says :

At three o'clock this morning I received Hammond's telegraphic message which destroyed this bright illusion (the fall of Sebastopol). Let us hope that this strange concurrence of falsehood is only premature, and that the event will shortly be realised.

What can Lord John mean? I fear, mischief; but of the grounds of his complaint I have no conception. In a note to me, some time ago, he said that Raglan ought to have the Garter, after having talked a short time before of bringing him before a Court of Inquiry. The steps taken without his knowledge, and even studiously withheld from his cognizance, defy all conjecture.

#### TO THE QUEEN

Lord Aberdeen hopes that Your Majesty was not greatly disappointed at the contradiction of the reported fall of Sebastopol. He had certainly brought himself to believe it, notwithstanding the absurdities and exaggerations of the accounts. But the concurrence of such a mass of falsehood from so many different quarters appeared impossible. The question is now one of time; and it is devoutly to be hoped that the blow may be struck forthwith; for if Prince Menschikoff should receive his reinforcements, the situation of the Allies may become most difficult.

Altogether, the position of affairs is full of anxiety. Whatever it is possible for men to do it is a great satisfaction to know it will be performed by Your Majesty's forces, both by sea and land.

In the same letter Lord Aberdeen states his views on Austria :

He has been, for some time, uneasy at appearances of estrangement from Austria, and of suspicion of

her policy, more or less encouraged by the French Government. Lord Aberdeen feels satisfied that, although a more active and vigorous course of policy may have been desirable, there is no ground to suspect the good faith of the Austrian Government, and that it would be most mischievous at such a moment as the present, to incur the risk of a quarrel.

The Austrian circular of the 14th Sep. ought to be sufficient to satisfy any person of the principles and policy of that Government in relation to the Eastern Question.

The Queen replied she had written to Lord Clarendon not to discourage the proposal of a Tripartite Treaty with Austria which Count Briol meant to propose.

On the 5th Lord Clarendon wrote :

Now, however, nothing seems sure except that the Russians are making the resistance that was naturally to be expected. *All* the news was believed at Vienna. The Emperor ordered by telegraph that the Queen and L. N. should be congratulated in his name. Hubner begged he might be invited to the Te Deum, and Briol announced an offensive and defensive Treaty. If the news all proves false, I shall be curious to see what course will be taken by Austria. You will disagree with me in not having patience with their policy, which is only one degree better than that of Russia.

Graham, then in attendance at Balmoral, wrote Lord Aberdeen a long despatch concerning Admiral Dundas, commanding the Black Sea Fleet. Lord Clarendon and the Duke of Newcastle had both conveyed to Sir James criticisms on his supposed deficiency in energy and vigour. Sir James states the case at great length, both on behalf of the

Admiral, and also for his critics. He then considers the question of recall and supersession.

The question of recalling Commanders-in-Chief engaged in great operations at a distance, and in a state of circumstances not known when the decision is to be taken, was much discussed in Sir Robert Peel's Cabinet in the case of Lord Gough. I cannot forget the argument of the Duke of Wellington, which prevailed on that occasion. He said: "You are dissatisfied with your General, perhaps with some reason; but while you are discussing his merits, he very probably is fighting and conquering your enemy; and what will be your position as a government when your censures and recall shall arrive on the scene of action in the moment of victory?" How right he was, and what a serious scrape we avoided by leaving Lord Gough in command! These blows are very apt to recoil on the Ministers who inflict them.

Lord Aberdeen's answer was the usual one of loyalty for all who worked with or under him. The Duke of Newcastle also urged the recall of Admiral Dundas, "not as a measure of punishment, but of precaution." Aberdeen's answer was precisely the same as that on which he took his stand when the popular outcry was against the Duke of Newcastle. "Your last letter," he wrote on October 8 to Sir James, "took me entirely by surprise. It is true that I had occasionally heard complaints of the inactivity of Dundas, but nothing specific was alleged against him; I had heard from the same quarters pretty much the same opinion expressed respecting Raglan himself."

Lord Aberdeen reviewed the Admiral's work and position, and continues:

I know nothing of Dundas himself, whom, indeed,



I never spoke to or saw in my life; but common justice demands that we should not proceed in such an offhand manner, and that we should act on better authority than the opinions of Mr. Lazard or Mr. Delane. If Dundas should be guilty of any proceeding which is clearly indefensible, and which we could hold out to the country as the ground of our decision let us by all means act accordingly; but, at such a moment as the present, to recall a man in his position on general allegations of remissness and incapacity, even if it were not manifestly unjust, would inevitably furnish the means of successful attack against any government by whom it was done.

Sir James, in acknowledging the letter, says :

It will strengthen my hands; and it will prove to the Duke of Newcastle the necessity of proceeding with caution and forbearance in the treatment of naval and military commanders even when they are less fortunate than ours have been in the Black Sea.

A Cabinet meeting was fixed for the 17th, and Lord John wrote from Woburn :

I shall of course be in town for the Cabinet of Tuesday. I think we must be very cautious how far we engage with Austria, unless she is prepared to fight by our side, and then I should put them on a par with France and ourselves; but to fetter our conduct in future negotiations without equivalent would be, I think, very unwise. I am still anxious for the *early* fall of Sebastopol.

Lord Aberdeen reported to the Queen that the principal subject of discussion had been the proposal

for a Treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with Austria. The Cabinet had had a considerable difference of opinion on the question and Lord Clarendon was to see Count Walewski with regard to certain modifications. Parliament was further prorogued to November 16, "no wish was very strongly expressed for an early session."

About the same time, Mr. Gladstone was writing to Mr. Arthur Gordon: "I hope Lord Aberdeen is by this time persuaded that the malevolence which has assailed him is about as impotent as most other malevolence." A "P.S." followed: "I see you think I have a postal privilege, but I have not. Has Lord Aberdeen? For if he has, it ought to be taken away from him."

On October 20 Lord Aberdeen reported to the Queen the result of two Cabinets chiefly occupied with the proposed treaty with Austria:

It is intended that Lord Clarendon should express a strong desire to enter into a Treaty with Austria, having for its object some more definite understanding with a view to future co-operation. In doing this he is to explain the objections felt by the British Government to enter into discussions by means of any Conference to be established at Vienna on the four points already agreed upon as the basis for pacific negotiations. These points admit of so much latitude of interpretation as to make it likely that differences would arise between the parties to such Conferences, which had much better be avoided until the time for real negotiations should arise.

Notwithstanding any bitterness of feeling which may exist in the Cabinet, the communication to the Austrian Government is intended to be of the most conciliatory and friendly description, and calculated, as Lord Aberdeen trusts, to lead to some agreement.

Argyll, on these Cabinet Councils, says :

I was not displeased to find it had been summoned to consider renewed overtures from Austria for a closer alliance.

At home we had to contend with a very strong but a very irrational prejudice. Among the tides of passion which surged at this time through the British people, one of the strongest was a democratic hatred of Austria as one of the leading members of the old Holy Alliance.

One of the most violent cries against Aberdeen in the Tory Press was that which regarded him as Austrian in his sympathies.

Such gusts of political passion and prejudice, however contemptible in themselves, have an appreciable effect even upon those who despise them, and I doubt whether Aberdeen himself, with all his resolute love of truth, would have thought it wise at that moment to propose renewed negotiations with Austria.

It was a great help to find our view taken up by our powerful ally, the French Emperor, and to find also that, at a second Cabinet on the 20th sensible progress was made towards an agreement with Austria.

On October 23, Lord Aberdeen wrote to Clarendon :

We ought not to lose time in placing our relations with Austria on a perfectly clear and definite footing, which can only be done by a treaty.

Lord Clarendon replied on another anxiety :

The United States have always been my "bête noire" in this war, and I am afraid that, as Graham says, on Crampton's letter, that we are fast drifting



to a quarrel, but if they choose to have it I know not how it is to be prevented.

I see no objection (answered Lord Aberdeen), to our sending an additional force to Admiral Panshawe, on the contrary, I think it is desirable to do so. It is well to be prepared; but I should greatly regret any extreme measures on account of Greytown or Mosquito, where our right is very questionable, and the importance of which has been much exaggerated.

"The time was now coming when another ally besides the French Emperor was to enter an appearance on our behalf. This was an ally, indeed, which we would gladly have done without. It was adversity." So writes Argyll, as he records his memory of the approach of the Crimean winter 1854 and 1855.

The shadow of that adversity begins to appear on the pages of the Aberdeen correspondence.

The first twenty-four days of the month of November were days of intense anxiety and suspense, and within those dates we find Clarendon saying, "The non-arrival of real information is maddening," and Argyll comments, "We have clearly found it a tougher job than our foolish boasters had led the public to expect."

On November 10, Lord Aberdeen reported to the Queen that the Cabinet meeting had been chiefly concerned with the means of conveying reinforcements of French troops to the Crimea.

Lord Raglan was directed to send some of his large steamships to Toulon, where, it was said, 8000 men were ready to embark.

The Queen's offer of her yacht had been fully appreciated, but, although the evidence of determination afforded by it might be favourable, it was thought, on the whole, that a bad effect would be produced by such an appearance of want of means.

On November 11, Lord Aberdeen received from Prince Albert a long memorandum :

This morning's accounts of the losses in the Crimea, the want of progress in the siege, with the advancing adverse season, and increasing army of the enemy, must make every Englishman anxious for his gallant brothers in the field, and the honour of his country. The Government will never be forgiven, and ought never to be forgiven, if it did not strain every nerve to avert the calamity of seeing Lord Raglan succumb from want of means.

The Prince set out in full the measures he deemed necessary to meet the anxious situation.

Inkerman was fought on November 5; the details of the battle reached the Cabinet on the 15th. On November 6, there occurred the gale which wrecked the stores of the Army. On November 13, Lord Aberdeen wrote that every effort must be made to send reinforcements without delay.

The urgency of pressing forward all reinforcements in men and stores occupies the whole of the correspondence between Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues.

The Queen wrote that the loss at Inkerman had deeply affected her. She added:

Reinforcements after the 9th or 10th (December) will be constantly arriving, which will cheer our noble and devoted troops.

The Queen concurs entirely in Lord Aberdeen's opinion that now would be a fitting time to confer the dignity of Field-Marshal on Lord Raglan, and she encloses her own letter to him announcing it, which she begs Lord Aberdeen to seal and despatch, through the Duke of Newcastle. This is the same course which was pursued by George IV towards the Duke of Wellington when he received the Field-Marshal's baton.

Lord Aberdeen, writing to the Queen of the Cabinet

meeting held on the proposed treaty between the Allied Powers and Austria :

It is now understood that the Emperor of Russia has accepted the four conditions proposed by Austria as the basis of negotiation, and agreed to by the Allied Powers; but it cannot be supposed that he is sincere in the acceptance. In all probability his object must be to separate Austria from the Allies by showing the unreasonableness of their demands, when the four conditions come to be explained. At the same time, it is barely possible that he may be sincerely desirous of peace. At all events, as there is no intention of making such extravagant demands as the cession of the Crimea or Finland, or the reconstitution of Poland, Austria is not likely to make any great objection to the terms proposed; and, indeed, if consistent, she ought to support them.

Palmerston and Russell pressed for the meeting of Parliament. To Lord Russell's peremptory advice, Lord Aberdeen replied : " I have never been opposed to an early meeting of Parliament." In communicating with the Queen, Lord Aberdeen says he humbly recommends Her Majesty to call Parliament together before Christmas, with the view of passing a law to enable the Militia to serve in the Mediterranean. By these means the regular troops now stationed at Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands would be liberated for service in the Crimea.

On the December 21, Lord Aberdeen reported of the Cabinet meeting to the Queen :

Various measures of detail with respect to the supply of the army and the conveyance of reinforcements were fully discussed. On the whole, a gloomy view appeared to be taken of the prospects of the army, and of its very critical position, especially by Lord John Russell.



The Militia Bill has passed through the Committee in the House of Lords without any division, but with much alteration and vexatious wrangling.

“The Queen really hopes and *thinks* that there is no reason to be so very gloomy about the army in the East,” was the answer to this letter.

Parliament adjourned on December 23, and Lord Aberdeen’s report on various matters to the Queen ended :

Lord Aberdeen will not weary Your Majesty by the recital of miserable domestic differences; but during the adjournment it will be necessary to bring these matters to an issue in the Cabinet, before which, he will humbly have the honour of laying these matters before Your Majesty.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE ENEMY WITHIN (1855)

"I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready for battle."

"You have now been Minister of England; you are one of a lofty line."—GLADSTONE TO ABERDEEN, 1855.

LORD ABERDEEN had dealt with "the miserable domestic differences," as one after the other they arose, till at length he felt assured that it was himself that was the stone of stumbling, to the most troublesome and self-seeking in the Cabinet.

The story is told in several of the contemporary Memoirs. Argyll states :

So far we had done well in the Cabinet as regards the comfort of our discussions and our perfect good-fellowship, even in the midst of difficult questions.

Since the quarrel between Lord John and Palmerston on the subject of Reform, the one great centre of disturbance amongst us had suppressed its fires, and, as the question of Reform was now by universal consent postponed to the end of the war, I had no fears of any renewal of internal strife.

On my return to London, I found a Cabinet box in circulation, full of correspondence between Aberdeen and Lord John, in which Lord John made the demand that the Duke of Newcastle should be removed and Palmerston put in his place at the War Office. This was an open assumption on the part of Lord John of the functions of the Prime Minister. There was no pretence for dismissing the Minister under whom our army had been organised, and had won the three great victories of Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman.

Aberdeen, therefore, although treating the proposal with temper and dignity, held firmly to a definite refusal, and ended by telling Lord John that he must absolutely decline to advise the Queen to take any such course. Lord John said he would appeal to the Cabinet.

On December 6 there was a Cabinet dinner at Aberdeen's house. When business began, Aberdeen said he had circulated the correspondence with Lord John, and he had nothing to add. But he did add one observation, which was that from some things Lord John had said it seemed clear that his objections really pointed not to a change in the departments, but to a change in the Head of the Government; that if Lord John could get the Cabinet or any Cabinet, to join him, he (Aberdeen) would not stand for a moment in his way; that he had not wished to keep his present place, but had felt the difficulty of getting out of it, now as much as ever, or more than ever, and he was quite ready to go if he could see his way to any other combination.

Lord John, in defending his own case, had not a word to say against the Minister whose removal he demanded, and under whom the British Army had just won victories, pronounced to be glorious days in its history by so competent a judge as Fitzroy Somerset.

All he said was that he felt uncomfortable in his position as a leader whom nobody followed; that he could not get any of his measures passed through the House; that he thought the War Minister ought to be in the House of Commons, and that the office should be held by Palmerston. Palmerston now interfered, and behaved splendidly. He said that on the principle laid down by Lord John, he (Palmerston) ought to be the Minister called upon to resign,



because he had not succeeded in passing one single measure of any kind through the House of Commons during the last session of Parliament.

Then, as regards the general policy of the Government, the only criticism he was inclined to make was that in his opinion the expedition to Sebastopol should have been undertaken sooner; but when he had proposed this, Lord John was the Minister who opposed him. We all intimated our recollections of the truth of this, whereupon Lord John admitted the fact, but defended his course upon the ground that, till Russia evacuated the Principalities, it was dangerous to leave the Turkish army unsupported.

This was the argument on which the whole question then turned, and apart from it there was unanimous agreement.

Aberdeen was not given to jokes in his conversation, still less was he disposed to indulge in chaff. But, when Palmerston told us how completely he had failed in legislation in the previous session Aberdeen could not resist the comical aspect of the situation, and he gravely interpolated the remark that the failure must have been due to the want of vigour in Palmerston. The laughter raised by this sally on the part of our generally solemn chief lightened the tension due to a very odious dispute, and as not a single member of the Cabinet said one word in support of Lord John, he subsided into a threat, that, although he would remain with us during the approaching December session, he would retire after it was concluded.

Aberdeen protested against this intimation, but the Cabinet seemed disposed to hope that Lord John would again change his mind.

"Johnny is preparing another breeze," Lord Clarendon warned his wife, as the Cabinet box went its

round, on the question of removing the Duke of Newcastle from the War Office. Lady Clarendon in her journal says of Lord Clarendon's position: "How could he be a party to a slur of the most outrageous kind being put on the Duke of Newcastle? He is also profoundly disgusted with Lord John's selfish and unpatriotic conduct."

Aberdeen had told Clarendon, after the Cabinet, that there were certain things his personal honour made it impossible for him to bear, and that he could not go on with the Leader of the House of Commons telling him daily that he was incapable.

Nothing but a sense of duty kept Lord Aberdeen from placing his resignation in the hands of the Sovereign. He knew that not one of his Cabinet would serve under Lord John at that particular crisis, and he knew that Palmerston would be the only alternative. For a time, he believed that Lord John's attack on the Duke had the concurrence of Palmerston. Had he been convinced that he desired the post, to which Lord John nominated him, in order to embarrass Aberdeen, he saw, as did also the Queen, that it must mean the break-up of the Government at a most critical time. The Crimean winter had come with all its accompanying horrors. Aberdeen and Newcastle had both remained in London, "meeting, to the utmost of their ability, every want which was brought to their notice from headquarters, and anticipating others, which the best practical advice within their reach at home suggested as likely to arise."

"Knowing better than any other men could know what the evils were that demanded cure, their days and nights were racked with anxiety from the consciousness that any complete cure was beyond their reach." So writes the biographer of the Prince Consort. No fresh arrangement of Ministers at home could supply an ill-found army with the necessary protection from the rigours of the winter. Lord John, as a known malcontent in the Government, was supplied with ample and full information of all the departmental failures. Through his charge

against Ministers in particular, and the Government as a whole, there shines the restless ambition to be himself in charge of affairs, and a conviction that anything that placed him there would be for the good of the country and the better conduct of the war.

The Cabinet of December 6 was followed by one on the 8th made equally stormy by Lord John.

Lord Clarendon says :

John Russell was wrong in his facts, insolent in his assertions, and most ill-tempered in his replies—everybody was dead against him, though some said nothing. Aberdeen's conduct was a most remarkable contrast, and there the matter rests.

These two Cabinet meetings were, however, the beginning of the end of the Aberdeen Ministry. However the Prime Minister felt, and whatever he said to his colleagues, he was completely master of himself when writing to the Queen.

On December 1, he had enclosed to her another letter from Lord John on the subject of the War Department :

He is inclined to think that Lord Palmerston is not likely to agree to Lord John's proposal at the present moment, in which case a very unpleasant feeling will exist in the minds of some members of the Cabinet, and the means will be preserved for future intrigue.

The Queen answered :

She can only repeat how shocked and indignant she is at Lord John Russell's propositions.

The measure which Lord Aberdeen mentions as being of so much importance, and which was yesterday adopted at the Cabinet for organising an army of reserve at Malta, was, as Lord Aberdeen has probably heard, entirely originated by the Prince, whose



unceasing anxiety for the army keeps him awake at night. He is much pleased to see it adopted.

On December 3, Lord John wrote :

I have not seen Palmerston or heard from him. I have no hesitation in saying that I revert to my original opinion, and must propose to the Cabinet that the office of Minister of War should absorb that of Secretary at War; and that the office should, for the present at least, be held by a member of the House of Commons.

On the 5th Graham informs Lord Aberdeen :

Our position as a Government is most unstable and uneasy. "Without are fightings, and within are fears." The latter are the most deadly, and the most difficult to confront. As the question was stated yesterday in the Cabinet, your displacement would seem to be the move intended; whereas the correspondence in circulation recommends a course entirely different. If the intention be to blow us up, either mine would in all probability be equally effectual; but it is not pleasant to stand upon a mine when you are about to engage the enemy in front, and any certainty is better than these constant doubts and painful misgivings.

On the 7th, Lord Aberdeen put before the Queen the result of the Cabinet meeting on the 6th. Lord John's proposals were held by all the Cabinet—"Lord Palmerston forms no exception—as quite untenable." Lord John had been aware of the unanimity of the Cabinet, and remained silent on his proposal to replace Newcastle by Palmerston. He dwelt in general terms on the absence of vigour in the prosecution of the war, and stated his conviction that the same course would be observed in future. He referred to his

position in the House of Commons with much bitterness, and declared that he would never pass such another session of Parliament as the last. He attributed the frequent defeats of the Government in the Commons to the Reform Bill having been withdrawn, by which it was shown that hostile attacks might be made with impunity.

It was obvious, however, that the drift of his observations tended to the substitution of himself as the head of the Government, rather than to any change of Departments; and this he did not deny when Lord Aberdeen pointed out the inference to be drawn from his remarks.

Lord Aberdeen said that whatever the real cause, Lord John had indicated his desire to resign.

#### TO THE QUEEN

In this situation, it is Lord Aberdeen's desire to come to Your Majesty's assistance by any means in his power. Lord John's defection will be a great blow, from which it is doubtful if the Government could recover; but Lord Aberdeen will come to no conclusion, or form any decided opinion, until he shall have had the honour of seeing Your Majesty.

*December 7.*—The Queen thanks Lord Aberdeen for his letter. She cannot sufficiently express her indignation and disgust at Lord John Russell's conduct, which really is beyond all belief at such a moment. She wishes Lord Aberdeen to come down to-morrow to dine and sleep here, but perhaps he would come here earlier than he usually does—by half-past five or six—so that we could have plenty of time to see him before dinner.

The Queen will also ask Lord Clarendon to dine and sleep here, which will take off the appearance of anything like a disturbance in the Cabinet, which Lord Aberdeen's return again so soon might otherwise have.

On the 16th, reporting on a Cabinet meeting, Lord Aberdeen told the Queen that Lord John had taken an active part in discussing the measures to be introduced into Parliament, and astonished the Cabinet, after all that had recently passed. After the Cabinet meeting Lord John spoke to Lord Aberdeen on another matter, and Lord Aberdeen asked him about the correspondence, and the notice of Lord John's intentions.

Without any embarrassment or apparent sense of inconsistency, he at once admitted he had changed his intention; and attributed it chiefly to a conversation yesterday with Lord Panmure, who, although a great military reformer, had convinced him that the present was not a fitting time for his proposed changes.

On the general aspect, Lord Aberdeen concluded in writing to the Queen :

It is true that there can be no security for a single week, and it is impossible to escape from a sense of self-degradation by submitting to such an unprecedented state of relations among colleagues; but the scandal of a rupture would be so great, and the evils which might ensue so incalculable, that Lord Aberdeen is sincerely convinced it will be most advantageous for Your Majesty's service and of the public to endeavour, by a conciliatory and prudent course of conduct, to preserve tranquillity and union as long as possible.

This does not exclude the necessity of firmness; but, in the present case, Lord Aberdeen has yielded nothing whatever, and he has received Lord John's change without resentment or displeasure.

The Queen replied :

With respect to Lord Aberdeen's second letter, giving an account of Lord John Russell's behaviour, and what passed between him and Lord Aberdeen,



while it only tends to lower Lord John still more in her eyes, she concurs in all that Lord Aberdeen says upon this subject.

The Queen is deeply impressed with the admirable temper, forbearance, and firmness with which Lord Aberdeen has conducted the whole of this very difficult and annoying transaction. In concluding, the Queen is anxious to impress upon Lord Aberdeen the great importance for the future, when similar attempts may be made, to resist them with equal firmness, and not to attempt to conciliate by concession.

Lord Aberdeen wrote to Lady Haddo :

I am sorry to tell you that the state of the Government is most critical. I do not see how it is possible to escape going to pieces. We have weathered many storms, but, I fear, within a very few weeks our fate is inevitable.

*Xmas Day.*—Our short session has been very stormy, and bodes ill for the future. External and internal causes combine to make me think that the Government cannot last; and it would not surprise me if we did not meet Parliament again; but I am accustomed to great uncertainties in these matters.

I assure you that my chief cause of regret in leaving office would be the fear that your comforts in Egypt might be diminished. The children of an ex-Vizier will scarcely meet with much respect.

We are all in great anxiety about Sebastopol. It is expected that the assault will take place just at this time. It will be a murderous affair, and the loss must be very great whether successful or not.

Jan. 7, 1855.

I have not been able to leave London at all during the winter, notwithstanding the adjournment of

Parliament (Lord Aberdeen wrote to Lady Haddo in Egypt). We shall meet again on the 23rd when much is expected which may affect the existence of the Government.

No doubt the difficulties are very great, and I always felt that it would be scarcely possible for us to carry on the war; but I should not altogether despair of overcoming all these difficulties if the Cabinet were really united. But the intrigue which has existed during the whole of my administration has now become more formidable than ever, and must, in all human probability, shortly lead to our dissolution. I should care little for the loss of office, but it is hard to be the victim of treachery and deceit.

A day or so later, the Prime Minister writes :

Your Majesty will have heard of Lord John Russell's departure for Paris. Lord John had intended to send Lady John with Mr. Eliot, but was persuaded to go himself, in order that he might be able to communicate personally with the Emperor.

Considering the intimate relations existing between the Emperor and a portion of Your Majesty's Government already, Lord Aberdeen must confess that he does not see this mission with much satisfaction.

#### TO LADY HADDO

*Jan. 9, 1855.*

We have just received intelligence of the greatest importance in the fact that the Emperor of Russia has accepted our terms proposed as the basis of peace and agrees to negotiate accordingly. Should he really be sincere we may have peace shortly, but there will be many difficulties on our side.

Of this, however, I am quite determined if reasonable terms should be within my reach. I will make

peace, or some one else shall carry on the war. My conscience has never been quite at ease in consequence of not having done enough to prevent it.

Do you remember the Sunday when I heard that the Emperor had accepted the Vienna note, and believed that all was settled? That was a happy day and perhaps the only one I have passed since I have been in office.

Reporting on the Cabinet meeting held while Lord John was in Paris, he says :

A letter was read from Lord John giving an account of his interviews with the Emperor and Mr. Drouyn de l'Huys. In this he appears to have mistaken the opinion of the Cabinet in supposing that they objected to the proposal being made to Russia to withdraw the Russian force from the Crimea as too favourable to Russia; whereas the Cabinet only thought that it would be favourable to Russia if any proposal so manifestly unreasonable should be made. Various sources of information combined to show that the Emperor was sincerely desirous of peace. But whether this be the case or not, his late acceptance of the four points was a most disastrous proceeding. It must paralyze Austria until his sincerity shall be brought to the test of negociation, and, as the Allies have fixed their own terms of negociation, it cannot now be well avoided, if the Emperor should really wish to bring the matter to this issue.

The Queen replied : " Lord John Russell's letter is naïve to excess."

Writing later the Queen added :

It shows that the practice of the Queen's different Cabinet Ministers going to Paris to have personal



explanations with the Emperor, besides being hardly a constitutional practice, must lead to much misunderstanding. How is the Emperor to distinguish between the views of the Queen's Government and the private opinions of the different Ministers of the Cabinet, all more or less varying, particularly in a coalition government? The Queen therefore hopes, that this will be the last of such visits. The Ambassador is the official organ of communication, and the Foreign Secretary is responsible for his doing his duty, and has the means of controlling him by his instructions and the despatches he receives, all of which are put on record.

On January 16, Lord Aberdeen reported the return of the self-constituted envoy :

Lord John joined the Cabinet about 4 o'clock, having arrived from Boulogne that day.

He spoke of his interviews with the Emperor and M. Drouyn de l'Huys, but did not enter very fully into the subject of his conversations. He appears to have spoken a good deal to the Emperor, as well as Prince Czartoryski, on the prospects of Poland. The Emperor said that in his heart he could not believe that England and France could ever really be satisfied with a peace which did not establish the independence of Poland; but he admitted that this could not now form any object of the war.

Prince Czartoryski, although, like all refugees, very sanguine of Polish success, still declared the necessity of the support of English or French troops. He thought that Austria might keep Galicia, and Prussia Posen; but that Russian Poland and the Duchy of Warsaw should be made independent.

Lord John did not clearly explain his own views, or the part he had taken in the discussion.

On January 10, the Queen wrote :

Before Parliament meets for probably a very stormy session, the Queen wishes to give a public testimony of her continued confidence in Lord Aberdeen's administration, by offering him the vacant Blue Ribbon. The Queen need not add a word on her personal feeling of regard and friendship for Lord Aberdeen, which are known to him now already for a long period of years.

The Prime Minister answered the same day :

When Your Majesty mentioned the subject to Lord Aberdeen some time ago, he had not thought of any such distinction; and perhaps at his time of life, and with his present prospects, he scarcely ought to do so.

There is no doubt that this unequivocal mark of gracious favour might strengthen his hands, and especially in those quarters where it would be most useful; but the power of misconstruction and malevolence is so great that the effect might possibly be more injurious than beneficial.

Perhaps Your Majesty would be graciously pleased to permit Lord Aberdeen to reflect a little upon the subject, and to submit his thoughts to Your Majesty.

Lord Aberdeen intreats Your Majesty to believe that in this, as in everything else, it is his desire to look exclusively to Your Majesty's welfare.

When he leaves Your Majesty's service, Your Majesty may be fully aware of his many imperfections as a Minister but he trusts that Your Majesty will always have reason to regard him as perfectly disinterested.

Lord Aberdeen soon conveyed the result of his "reflections." He recommended that the Queen should bestow the vacant Garter on Lord Cardigan. His "violent party politics made it impossible for the Prime Minister to recommend him under ordinary circumstances, but at the time his great gallantry and

personal sacrifices, gave him a claim on the Queen's favourable consideration. It is even possible," the letter ended, "that his political opponents might give Lord Aberdeen some credit for tendering such advice."

The Queen was glad to see from Lord Aberdeen's letter that her offer had pleased him. The alternative suggested does not meet with her approval. The Queen leaves it to Lord Aberdeen to choose the moment at which he would wish to make public her bestowal of the Blue Ribbon on himself.

The correspondence went to Newcastle :

I congratulate you (wrote the Duke) upon this additional proof of the Queen's confidence and approval. If I wanted any further evidence of the propriety of my declining the vacant honour I should find it in the fact that Her Majesty has conferred it on you.

Once more the Queen assured her Prime Minister that "there are few, if any, on whom she would confer the Blue Ribbon with greater pleasure than on so kind and valued a friend as he is to us both."

Lord Aberdeen must have had some amusement in reading Lord John Russell's reception of the news.

*Jan. 17, 1855.*—I congratulate you on the Queen's bestowal of the vacant Garter. I entirely agree with Her Majesty in her objection to Lord Cardigan. Lord Hardinge had, I think, a claim superior to that of Lord Ellesmere, and Lord Raglan will have a just claim, I trust and believe, when the campaign is over.

But as a mark of the Sovereign's personal confidence, the present appropriation is very becoming. I am at all events glad that I declined the honour.

The contents of two diaries tell best the history of the days that preceded the resignation of Lord Aberdeen. Argyll writes :

The period of thirty-eight days which elapsed



between the end of the session and the date of the next session when the Aberdeen Ministry was overthrown was a period of pain and grief to us, such as I remember with horror, and find it impossible to describe. The splendid army of over 30,000 men which we had organised, and had sent out with such brilliant success to the Crimea, was reported to us every week as dying by inches in the besieging lines. Yet, we were kept in complete ignorance of the causes. What we did know was that reinforcements of great strength and whole flotillas of supplies had been poured into Balaclava. The silence of Lord Raglan was positively excruciating. Nothing came from him but the dryest facts. One of these seemed to me to be alarming in the highest degree—namely, this : that our effective force in the Crimea did not exceed 16,000 men, with about 9,000 in hospital. I do not know if Palmerston remembered, as I did, the conversation we had together in July, when the Sebastopol expedition had been ordered—how I had been full of anxiety, and he had been still more full of hopeful, confident expectations.

I am bound to say that nobody was more vexed and angry than he was now. I recollect him one day listening to a very bad account of the army which had reached us—an account which was expressed in the sentence that we were losing a regiment a week. “But why should this be?” said Palmerston, almost starting to his feet. This was the question we were all asking, and were all equally defeated in getting any guidance in reply.

We had three Cabinets on the 18th, 19th and 20th of January. At all of them Lord John was not only present, but taking an active part in measures of his own, upon Education, on Church rates, thus giving every indication of his continuous membership and fellowship with us.

On Jan. 23 Parliament reassembled. Lord Grey gave notice of a motion on a reorganisation of the War Office, and Roebuck gave notice of a motion for inquiring into the causes of the condition of our Army in the Crimea. This last was, of course, a vote of want of confidence in the Government.

On the 24th we had another Cabinet. I walked down to it alone and rather early. On entering the room I found that Palmerston was there, and nobody else. As he was not generally more than punctual, I was surprised. The mystery was soon solved when he handed to me a note, saying, "Read that." It was a note from Lord John, telling Palmerston in three lines that he would hear a letter from himself read to the Cabinet and that it was a painful and necessary step.

When all the Cabinet had assembled, Aberdeen read the letter. Newcastle began the discussion by offering to resign, as he knew the run was against him, and the Cabinet could not go on unless he left the War Department.

We all felt that it would be dishonourable to ourselves to make him our scapegoat for events for which we ought all to share the responsibility in our several degrees.—In some discussion of Lord John's act, it clearly appeared that it was universally condemned by all his colleagues. He had sent his resignation without consulting one of them, and late at night, after taking part in the business of the House.

Aberdeen told us that he received it with very great surprise, as this was almost the only occasion on which he should have thought such a course impossible.

To desert the friends with whom he had been acting just at the moment when they were about to be attacked would indeed seem a strange course.

After a long debate on our position, it was decided

that, considering the evil of a weak and crippled Government, with a great war on hand, it was best for us all to resign, and give as our reason what really decided us in this connection.

Accordingly, Lord Aberdeen went off to Windsor to inform the Queen of what had happened, and to place all our resignations in the Queen's hands. On the following day we repaired to Downing Street to hear the arrangements for giving up our various offices.

Our astonishment was therefore great when Aberdeen came from Windsor to tell us that we were still Ministers of the Crown, because the Queen had peremptorily refused to accept the resignation of Aberdeen or of any of his colleagues. Her Majesty told Aberdeen, and commanded him to tell us, that our resignation under such conditions was unjust towards herself, injurious to our own character, and indefensible as regards the country.

Ministers differed in the wisdom of carrying on; none of them differed in recognising that the Queen had exercised her prerogative with wisdom and with strength.

Amid all the uncertainties of the situation, one thing was certain—all the world around us was in a passion. The House and the public were determined to hang somebody. The Duke of Newcastle was the obvious victim. Newcastle told his colleagues that he must resign and that he meant to do so the moment the division was announced whatever it might be.

This only brought a fresh dilemma to the Cabinet. Could they tell the House of this resignation before the division? It might save the Government from defeat as a whole, but it could not save Newcastle's colleagues from the same dishonour that had fallen on Lord John Russell, a desertion in the face of the enemy.



The Cabinet was unanimous, and determined to meet the decision of the Commons an unbroken body. "There is nothing," says Argyll, "I remember in my public life with greater satisfaction than the conduct of the Aberdeen Cabinet at this, the last moment of its existence. An overpowering sense of personal honour told us that we must stand or fall with Newcastle."

Another Cabinet meeting followed and a debate in the Commons where Palmerston spoke feebly for the Government, and Lord John Russell told his reason for resigning and gave Newcastle cause to complain of his unfair treatment of himself.

Aberdeen, with that determined love of the exact truth and of perfect justice which was characteristic of him, was the only man who said anything in defence of Lord John.

On Monday the 29th we left Windsor with Aberdeen, and we again discussed the probable issue of the crisis. Aberdeen said he was determined to part friends with Lord John, and spoke with characteristic justice, moderation and candour of everybody and everything. I never admired him more.

Lord Aberdeen's sensation was one of surprise—a surprise to which in the case of many of his colleagues was added an indignant suspicion of deliberate treachery.

It cannot be denied that the resignation was effected at the worst possible time, and in the worst possible manner, for Lord John's reputation. Had he resigned either on the failure of his proposal to displace Newcastle, or at Christmas, according to his original announcement, his course might on public grounds have been censured, but would have been open to no shadow of personal reproach.

After the change of purpose avowed by him on Dec. 16, after taking part in the preparation of the

measures of the session, after contemplating the certainty that a vote of censure would be proposed; resignation on notice of that vote being given, without having even hinted to a single colleague that he contemplated such a step, assumes another character, and cannot escape from the charge of inconsiderate levity without admitting a far graver one.

Lord John expected Lord Aberdeen would at once resign on being deprived of his support. Or, failing that, he expected that the Whig portion of the Coalition who had usually acted with Lord John, would retire from a Government of which he was no longer a member.

If the Government had broken up before Parliament had pronounced censure on it, Lord John might have been able to form and be the head of a purely Whig Government.

On learning none of Lord Aberdeen's colleagues had left the Government, and that it was obvious they had no intention either of following his example or his leadership, Lord John felt he had made a mistake. Once more he tried to retrieve his position, and intimated through a common friend that if Lord Palmerston went to the War Office, he would feel security had been given that the war would be prosecuted with vigour.

All such overtures were at once and peremptorily rejected by Lord Aberdeen. He could no longer go on receiving these self-seeking repentances. His own impulse had been to retire when Lord John resigned. The Queen had overruled him, and Lord Aberdeen's colleagues desired every one of them to testify publicly their disapproval of Lord John's action.

It was therefore determined to resist Mr. Roebuck's motion, and to meet it with a direct negative.

Lord Aberdeen's later correspondence contains an interesting reference to this episode in his Government. He had been staying at Balmoral during the crisis of the Indian Mutiny. Commenting to Sir James Graham on his visit, he says :

There is certainly much uneasiness, and great anxiety on the subject of India, and I think rather a disposition not to be satisfied at what is now doing. This was certainly the case with Clarendon. The exertions made here are held to be insufficient, and the gravity of the crisis to be undervalued by Palmerston. I told the Queen that, if all her Ministers were turned out to-morrow, they would deserve it just as much as we did in 1855; although I do not mean to say they would do so more.

It is clear they are at their wits' end respecting the future government of India. It is easy to talk of destroying the double Government; but the transfer to the Crown, or rather to Parliament, will be a work of enormous difficulty.

Should a committee of inquiry be moved by Lord John, or by anyone else, notwithstanding the pressure of the Indian war, I think the Government will probably agree to it; as we ought to have done to Roebuck's motion.

The final stages of Lord Aberdeen's resignation are best told in the diary of Mr. Arthur Gordon, who acted as his father's private secretary throughout his Premiership.

#### EXTRACT FROM JOURNAL

*Jan. 22, 1855.*

Parliament meets again to-morrow. That the session will be a stormy one is evident; but what will be its result is not so clear.

Lord John is the one source of trouble and weakness. We cannot exist with or without him. Wayward, uncertain, querulous, it is impossible to imagine what he may or may not do next. At present things look better than they have done for some time as regards his disposition on great questions. He seems



wholly to have withdrawn his late plans of War Office reform, and at the Cabinet proposed a scheme for its reorganisation not very practical or practicable, but unobjectionable. He is not disinclined for peace, and agrees that an effort to secure it must be made at Vienna. His Lordship and Lord Clarendon are not without hopes that he may be induced to undertake the negotiations himself.

Whatever Lord Palmerston's intrigues, or his relations with the Emperor, I doubt if he now desires anything so much as a continuance of existing arrangements. It suits his game far better than Lord John's decided pre-eminence would.

The Duke of Newcastle—I hardly dare to write what is known, I believe, to none of his colleagues in the Cabinet—means to resign, not admitting the justice of the outcry against him, but avowing that with such unpopularity he cannot usefully discharge the duties of the office.

He is right, and in the long run he will gain by it; but, I am afraid His Lordship wishes to appoint Herbert in his place. This will be a mistake. It must, under existing circumstances, be Palmerston. Not that Herbert would not fill the office better, but because if a change is made, this is the only one that will give real confidence.

It is curious how *alone* Lord John is. The world without think the Cabinet is divided into two distinct parties; but this is most untrue. There is not a shade of difference between Lord Clarendon, Sir Charles Wood, Granville, Sir George Grey, Cranworth, Molesworth, and the Peelites. Lord John stands solitary; and Lord Palmerston, Newcastle, and Lansdowne are the fire eating war party.

Will the Blue Ribbon, which the Queen has pressed on His Lordship, do him good or harm? At all events it has greatly pleased him, and at that I rejoice,

for he has not too much of what he likes in his daily life.

The House of Commons met again to-day after the Christmas Recess. There was not much apparent excitement or interest, nor was the House very full. Roebuck gave notice of a motion for a Committee to enquire into the state of things at Sebastopol, which was cheered by Radicals and Tories. Lord John, as President of the Council, gave notice of a Bill on Education, and then Sir Benjamin Hall brought in a Bill on the local Government of the Metropolis, and commenced making a very dull and lengthy speech on the same, whereon in the innocence of my heart, I went into the lobby to write letters, and at eight went home to dinner to report the quiet opening of the Session, little dreaming of the bombshell about to explode. We had our usual quiet family dinner, and about ten I went into the library to see what was in the boxes. The first I opened was from Lord John, and contained his resignation! I returned to the Drawing Room to summon His Lordship, who was very unwilling to come. "Don't bother"—"Can't it wait?" &c., but who finally came and was as much surprised as myself. Lord John has so often resigned that the first impulsive impression was one of amusement,—the next, (after the vagaries that he has performed during the last month,) one of relief;—but of course it is impossible not to see that by resigning now he will probably upset the Coach again as he has so often done before. I hinted at his probable repentance, but on this point His Lordship's mind was firmly made up. Whatever happened, this resignation should be real. He would not voluntarily submit to a repetition of late scenes. After a little talk I went down to fetch Sir James Graham. He came out to me in a dressing gown, alarmed lest H. L. should have had another attack. I told him

what had happened. He put on a great fur coat, and came up with me in the cab. On our way we talked over the event. His first idea, like mine, was that Lord John would change his mind, but when he reached Argyll House, he very soon saw that on this point my father was quite determined.

I could not help wondering as we jogged along slowly, with our feet in the dirty straw, who had been the last, and who would be the next fares of the sleepy driver, and what they had talked, and would talk about?

LORD JOHN RUSSELL TO LORD ABERDEEN

*Chesham Place, January 23rd, 1855.*

MY DEAR LORD ABERDEEN,—Mr. Roebuck has given notice of a motion for a Committee to inquire into the conduct of the war. I do not know how this motion is to be resisted, but as it involves a censure upon the War Department conducted by my colleagues, my only course is to tender my resignation.

I have, therefore, to request that you will lay my humble resignation of the office which I have the honor to hold before the Queen, with the expression of my gratitude for Her Majesty's kindness for many years past.

I remain,

My dear Lord Aberdeen,

Yours very truly,

J. RUSSELL.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL TO LORD ABERDEEN

*January 23rd, 1855.*

MY DEAR LORD ABERDEEN,—In sending you this letter I beg to assure you of my high regard for your personal character, and my sense of your kindness and liberality.

Yours truly,

J. RUSSELL.



## LORD ABERDEEN TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL

*Argyll House, January 24th, 1855.*

MY DEAR LORD JOHN,—I laid your resignation before the Queen to-day, who received it with expressions of much concern. I found, however, that Her Majesty was already in possession of your intentions by a letter from yourself.

The resignation of Lord John sealed the fate of the Government, as he intended it should do. The debate on Mr. Roebuck's motion extended over two nights, and the motion was carried by a majority of 157, only 148 voting with the Ministers, and 305, the whole of the Opposition, including a great many Liberals, voting against them.

On January 30, Lord Aberdeen placed the resignation of the Cabinet in the hands of the Queen.

After the difficulties which succeeded Lord Aberdeen's resignation had been finally surmounted, the Queen wrote to announce to Lord Aberdeen that Lord Palmerston had just kissed hands upon his appointment as Premier. The Queen said that she was "relieved from great anxiety and difficulty, and felt that she owed much to Lord Aberdeen's kind and disinterested assistance."

The Queen had accepted the resignation of "our good Aberdeen" with an emotion she was at no pains to restrain. A few days later, he went to Windsor to be installed as a Knight of the Garter. By a coincidence, it happened to be the day on which Lord Palmerston's writ was moved, on his accepting the office of First Lord of the Treasury. Lord Aberdeen wrote that evening from Windsor to Lady Haddo:

A little thing showed me her feelings to-day. I am come down here to be invested as a Knight of the Garter, and at a part of the ceremony it is necessary to kiss the Queen's hand. This, I need not say, is held out in a lifeless manner for the purpose. To my

surprise, when I took hold of it to lift it to my lips, she squeezed my hand with a strong and significant pressure. The Queen has also desired that I should keep the Green Ribbon, for which she finds there have been two precedents in the last hundred and fifty years. These are empty honours; but they are proofs of real regard.

When he arrived at the Castle he found a letter waiting him.

*Feb. 7th, 1855.*

Though the Queen hopes to see Lord Aberdeen in a short while, she seizes the opportunity of approving the appointment of the Hon. Rev. Arthur Douglas to the living of St. Olive's, Southwark, to say what she hardly trusts herself to say verbally, without giving way to her feelings. She wishes to say what a *pang* it is for her to separate from so kind, and dear, and valued a friend as Lord Aberdeen has ever been to her since she has known him.

The day he became her Prime Minister was a *very happy* one for her; and throughout his Ministry he has ever been the kindest and wisest adviser, one to whom she could apply for advice, on all and trifling occasions even.

This she is sure he will still ever be—but the losing him as her first adviser in her Government is *very painful*. The pain has been to a certain extent lessened by the knowledge of all he has done to further the formation of this Government in so loyal, noble and disinterested a manner, and by *his* friends retaining their posts which is a great security against any possible dangers.

The Queen is sure that the Prince and herself may ever rely on his valuable support and advice in all times of difficulty, and she now concludes with the

expression of her warmest thanks for all his kindness and devotion, as well as of her unalterable friendship and esteem for him, and with every wish for his health and happiness.

Nearly all his late colleagues wrote to him. Lord Granville congratulated himself that he had served under "one of the most just, liberal, and courageous men with whom it has ever been my good fortune to be associated."

Argyll assured him :

Should I continue in public life, I shall seek as the highest object of ambition, to imitate the virtues of your public character; especially that scrupulous regard to moderation, truth, and justice, which most of us are daily sacrificing to the opinions of others, or prejudices of our own.

Mr. Gladstone wrote at great length :

I feel as if a dear friend were dead; and, I abhor the manner in which the end has been accomplished. Even the unbounded kindness of your letter cannot overpower the revulsion with which I look back on the past fortnight and I have used the poor and feeble expedient of trying to shut my eyes upon the fact I loathed. . . . Your whole demeanour has been a living lesson to me; and I have never gone, with my vulnerable temper and impetuous moods into your presence, without feeling the strong influence of your calm and settled spirit.

One other instance of the consistent magnanimity which marked his conduct at the time is recorded. On the night on which he announced his resignation to the House of Lords, Lord John's sister, Lady Abercorn, dined with the family at Argyll House. Her relations with Lord Aberdeen were those of a daughter, and she was full of shame and distress at



her brother's action. Lord Aberdeen devoted the whole evening to reassuring her, dwelling on all the noble traits of Lord John's character, and speaking of him in terms of ungrudging praise, while lamenting the weakness and eagerness which had made him in this instance the instrument of more selfish men, combined with his impatience and eagerness for office.

But while all along doing justice to his personal honour, and in the end believing he had acted from impulse, Lord Aberdeen certainly at the time conceived his overthrow to have been deliberately planned. Carefully though he refrained from allowing any expression unfriendly to Lord John to escape his lips, he had expressed to Lady Haddo his belief that his coming downfall was due to "treachery and deceit." To the Duke of Bedford Aberdeen wrote at some length on the course pursued by Lord John. He thought he had defeated his own ends :

Had he supported us against Roebuck's motion, or enabled us in some mode to meet it with success—Clarendon and I had already spoken about the possibility of Lord John going to Vienna, to negotiate on the Four Points; and if I had remained at the head of the Government, I can have little doubt that peace would have been made. Had the peace been confirmed, I might then have irresistibly pressed my proposed retirement in his favour; or if the peace had been censured, the Government would at least have fallen in a cause of which I should have felt proud to the end of my days. Instead of this euthanasia, however, I was ignominiously overthrown in consequence of Lord John's decision.

Lord Aberdeen proceeded to say that though he had some reason to complain, Lord John's conduct had been more warmly resented by Aberdeen's friends than by himself. He believed Lord John

had thought him "too slow and undecided in giving effect to my intentions; for I will not do him the injustice of supposing that he ever for a moment doubted my sincerity." He himself may have thought Lord John over-sensitive, or sometimes rash, or impracticable.

But these are trifles. We parted with expressions of mutual regard, which on my side were perfectly sincere, as I have no doubt they were on his. These expressions I am happy in having this opportunity to renew; as well as, with my admiration of his great powers and noble impulses, to assure you that I shall always feel a warm interest in his reputation and honour.

It was eminently characteristic of Lord Aberdeen that in spite of provocation he steadily maintained that Lord John was the proper head of the Liberal party, and he never ceased to desire that he should succeed him as Prime Minister.

It is not part of this memoir to relate how quickly Nemesis overtook Lord John. He was, perhaps, the only man in the kingdom who was surprised that Lord Aberdeen's colleagues refused to serve under one who had proved so disloyal to them all. It must have given Mr. Arthur Gordon some filial delight when he heard that Argyll had bluntly declined Lord John's invitation to call on him. Lansdowne gravely regretted it was impossible to assist him. His oldest friend, Sir George Grey, said he could not serve under him, owing to his late conduct. In forty-eight hours he experienced a heavier fall than the Prime Minister whom he had jockeyed out of office, and he had not Aberdeen's serene conscience and profound thankfulness in laying down a burden he had most unwillingly taken up.

Where Lord John had failed, Lord Palmerston was able to succeed, but only because Lord Aberdeen made it a point of honour with his late colleagues that

they should serve under one for whom the popular voice had steadily called. So strong was the feeling against Lord John's conduct that the colleagues who were most intimate with Lord Aberdeen were bent on declining any proposals made to them by Lord Palmerston. He must have failed to form a Government, as Derby and as Lord John had failed, had not Lord Aberdeen exerted himself in no common manner to re-form the Cabinet under Palmerston. Some of them thought that Aberdeen should himself serve under Palmerston, and thus give them the security of his continued presence. His argument with Mr. Sidney Herbert may be given, as containing the sum of his conception of the situation.

*Feb. 5, 1855.*

You say you are in a great difficulty as to the course you ought to take. I am in none whatever. . . .

Your reluctance to continue in Palmerston's Cabinet is mainly founded on the apprehension that he will pursue a war-like policy beyond reasonable bounds. I have already told you that I have had some explanation with him on the terms of peace, with which I am satisfied. But whatever may be his inclinations, you ought to rely on the weight of your own character and opinions in the Cabinet. I am persuaded that the sentiments of the great majority of the Cabinet are similar to your own, and that you may fairly expect reason and sound policy to prevail in the question of peace and war. . . .

In addition to the public necessity, I think you owe much to our late Whig colleagues, who behaved so nobly and generously towards us, after Lord John's resignation. They have some right to expect this sacrifice.

You conclude your letter by pressing me to enter the Cabinet. Now there is really no sense in this; and I cannot imagine how you could seriously propose



it. You would expose me to gratuitous indignity, to which no one ought to expect me to submit. I say gratuitous; for I could not be of the slightest use in such a situation for the purpose you require.

I can retire with perfect equanimity from the Government in consequence of the vote of the House of Commons; but to be stigmatised as the head, and tolerated as a subordinate member of the very same Cabinet to-morrow would be a degradation to which I could never submit. I tell you plainly that I would rather die than do so; and indeed the sense of it would go far to kill me.

*Windsor Castle, Feb. 17, 1855.*

MY DEAREST MARY (Lady Haddo),

The news of the overthrow of my Ministry will probably have reached you before this letter, but the matter will not be very comprehensible to you. Indeed it is not easy to explain it, for it has been owing to a strong popular feeling for which no real foundation exists.

The sufferings of our army in the Crimea have been very great and there has been much mismanagement on the spot. The public here not very unnaturally, are persuaded that there has also been neglect and official misconduct in the management of the war in this country.

Notice of a motion of a Committee of inquiry was given in the House of Commons. Lord John professed to think that it could not be resisted, and consequently resigned.

A large number of his friends supported the motion and the Government were defeated by a large majority. This was equivalent to a vote of censure and made it necessary for us to resign.

The Queen first tried Lord Derby who failed to

form a Ministry. Then, Lord Lansdowne, then Lord John himself, but even his former Whig colleagues disapproved so much of his conduct that they refused to have anything to do with him.

In this difficulty the Queen sent to Lord Palmerston, as the only thing possible. There was a good deal of excitement and discontent in consequence of the prolonged uncertainty and delay in the formation of a Ministry and this being the only one possible I have laboured hard to assist in establishing it. I have persuaded my own friends, although with difficulty, to remain in office, and Lord John having previously gone, the only members who retire are the Duke of Newcastle, and myself.

I have gained credit for generosity and magnanimity, but it is a strange event that I should be active in securing the success of the Ministry of Lord Palmerston.

Our poor Queen has been in a state of great anxiety and has expressed herself as very thankful for my conduct. . . .

I do not know how I shall bear being out of office. I have many resources and many objects of interest but after being occupied with great affairs it is not easy to subside to the level of common occupations.

Should it please a merciful God to restore you both to this country I think that I should possess sources of happiness far greater than before your departure.

*Argyll House, July 9.*

An hour or two after I had written the first part of my letter to you, I received one from the Queen. Although she wrote to prevent the expression of her feelings at the interviews which shortly followed she was not successful in this respect and I had as much difficulty myself. It is something to have inspired

such feelings and as the Queen is truth itself, I may rest assured that all is genuine.

And now God bless you dearest child,  
Your most affectionate  
ABERDEEN.

### TO LADY HADDO

*March 8, 1855.*

I have good hopes of peace. Lord J. Russell went to attend the Vienna Conference with very pacific intentions having quite agreed with me respecting the terms of peace.

This awful event of the Emperor's death must promote the chance of peace and in this respect will be attended with advantage to the world.

But he was a great Prince who had conferred many inestimable benefits upon his country and indeed upon Europe. In this country we are always in extremes and history will do him more justice than he has received from our newspapers.

### TO LADY HADDO

*April 24, 1855.*

I can hardly trust myself to say all I think and feel in looking forward to meeting you again. The reality of it is almost too much happiness to expect.

Our dreams of peace are at an end. Lord John has left Vienna and is on his road home. The people are generally still eager for war and it will be some time before their eyes are opened.

We have had the Emperor Napoleon and his Empress here for a week which has created a prodigious excitement. He has now returned to Paris with the intention of going in a few days to the Crimea. I do not know that all this is likely to be permanently



useful but the Queen has acted her part admirably although it must have cost her no small effort.

These disinterested efforts were at the time, but only for the moment, successful. They were warmly and handsomely acknowledged by Palmerston. His new administration was practically the old one, and handed over to the new Prime Minister, by the influence of Lord Aberdeen. He was a happier man as he left office than he had ever been in it. He had no personal ambitions, and had always disliked high office. When he formed his Cabinet in 1853, his highest hope was to have peace in his time. He had seen war in his early manhood, and he had learnt to abhor all the consequences that flowed from it. He believed that he could maintain European peace. Had he dreamed that he could not avert the Crimean War, he would have refused office with the deepest convictions of his whole character.

It was a curious fate, which overtook him, that almost immediately after he had formed his Coalition Cabinet the war clouds, at first no bigger than the hand of a man, began to mount into the European skies. The circumstances of his early life had given him a tendency to melancholy, and the stern discipline to which he had subjected his nature in order to carry the burden of his private sorrows had invested him with a reserve which was partly Scottish, partly the result of manifold troubles falling on a heart whose affections had again and again been submerged by the waves and billows of great adversity. Something may be attributed to another trait in his character, which also came to him from his northern descent. That was his stern and high moral sense and the deep conscientiousness of his public as well as his private life. Writing to a friend in 1857, as his strength was beginning to fail, he says :

You are quite right in supposing that I look back with satisfaction to the efforts made by me to preserve

peace. My only cause of regret is that when I found this to be impossible I did not at once retire, instead of allowing myself to be dragged into a war which, although strictly justifiable in itself, was most unwise and unnecessary. All this will be acknowledged some day, but the worst of it is that it will require fifty years before men's eyes are opened to the truth.

Among his papers at this time is found a text which, his son says, was written by him more than once and at different times on various scraps of paper. The words stand alone, and seem placed to meet the eye constantly.

"And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God : but the Word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars ; thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight " (1 Chron. xxii. 7, 8).

Lord Aberdeen, in the long tenure of his estates, had built many new churches, manses, and schools, and had great pleasure in these estate improvements. The manse of Methlick was about this time rebuilt on a new site and in a better manner. The parish church was old and dilapidated. "I leave that for George," said his father, when his attention was drawn to the bad condition of the church. This was very unusual conduct on his part, and the reason was never suspected, even by those who knew him best, till after his death, when his papers disclosed his belief that he was debarred from his privileges as a heritor and a churchman "because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight."

Lord Stanmore, in his short relation of the causes which brought about the Crimean War, uses words which may fitly close the account given, from the Aberdeen correspondence :

I now enter on the saddest chapter of this story—

that which relates how, under the administration of the most devoted lover of peace who has governed the country since the Revolution, England became involved in the only European war in which she had taken part for seventy-five years.



## CHAPTER XVI

THE WARFARE ACCOMPLISHED (1855 TO DEC. 14, 1860)

“Let us not despise our Forefathers. We have no right to do so. God grant that we may regain some little share of their noble spirit, even with a mixture of their Prejudices and their Faults.”

### FROM MR. GORDON'S DIARY

*Jan. 30, 1855.*—Soon after breakfast Gladstone came in, to talk over the debate and the division. He observed that such an enormous majority not only knocked us down, but sent us down with such a whack, that one heard one's head thump as it struck the ground.

His Lordship complimented him on having made so excellent a speech under such difficulties, on which he burst out into a declaration of enthusiastic affection, prophesying that the day would shortly come when his conduct and policy would be more truly appreciated, and that he would then be held in lasting honour. After Gladstone had abused Lord John a little (an indulgence which is now almost a necessity of his nature) and mentioned that he had meant to compare Lord John on his back bench to Achilles in seclusion; probabilities, and the nature of His Lordship's speech on Thursday, were more seriously considered. Nothing very definite was agreed to, except that the Queen should not be advised to send for Lord Derby, but, that he should be indicated to her, as the proper person to apply to in the first instance.

It was snowing heavily, as it had been all the morning, and H. L. wanted to take Gladstone to the Cabinet in his carriage, but he preferred to trudge

down through the snow. It made him feel rural, he said.

The Cabinet met at 12, and at half-past one I went down to take H. L. to the Station. We drove through the dreary Parks white with snow, which was still falling in large flakes, and went down to Windsor. The grey towers of the Castle were relieved by a background of yet greyer and gloomier sky, and the large snowflakes fell slowly, thickly and sullenly round us as we walked up from the Station.

I parted from my father at the gate with a sigh. I watched him cross the Court through the snow, and then passing through the Norman gate, and turning into the cloisters, I ran down the hundred steps and crossed the bridge to Eton.

The conversation at dinner, turned chiefly on the incidents of the debate, and the chances of Lord Derby's success. H. L.'s chief anxiety seems to be on account of the Haddos, who he fears will be ill treated by the Pasha, when the news of his fall reaches Egypt. I tell him they are civilised enough there now to know that English ex-Grand Viziers do not have their heads cut off.

*Feb. 1.*—Went down to the House, where a good deal of excitement prevailed. It was known that Lord Derby had given up, but not who had been sent for. Hayter rose to move a new writ, and as Palmerston was not in the House it was generally supposed he was Prime Minister, and Hayter was listened to with profound attention till he reached the words "new Radnor," when an explosive fit of laughter burst out on all sides. Palmerston when he came, simply announced the resignation, and moved an adjournment.

I rushed off to join H. L., and met "the two culprits"

marching down arm in arm from the Treasury. So we three walked to the Lords together, the Duke of Newcastle on one side of him and I on the other.

An immense mob of Privy Councillors were round the Throne, and a crowd of members below the bar. The ladies' galleries were crammed. His Lordship spoke with great dignity and simplicity. It was just what a resignation speech should be. The Duke then followed him, and his open manly bearing was in itself a strong contrast to Johnny's hesitating sneaking way of speaking on Monday night. The vindication itself was complete, and the exposure of Lord John crushing.

When all was over, H. L., Gladstone and I stood by the fire, in the room behind the Throne, talking just where, and as we did two years ago, when he made his incoming speech !

*Feb. 10.*—The Queen has sent H. L. another very pretty letter, making him a present of her bust by Marochetti. He has thankfully received it “for his descendants,—for himself Her Majesty’s image must ever be imprinted on his heart.”

In looking back upon the work of the Aberdeen administration, it is impossible not to see that it was a great one. In the first place, it set the example of that reconstruction of parties which had become essential to the conduct of political affairs. And this was permanent. In the second place, it carried an immense reform in the fiscal system of the country—a reform so large and so fertile that it marks an epoch in our domestic history. In the third place, it established a friendly alliance with France, amounting to active co-operation in a common foreign policy. In the fourth place, it established as a principle, in



our dealings with the Turkish Empire, that the affairs of that Empire were a matter of concern to the whole of Europe, and ought not to be left to the selfish action of a single Power. In the fifth place, it took a step which went a long way towards recognising the rising Italy, then represented by Sardinia, as one of the great Powers of Europe.

This is the summing up of the Duke of Argyll on the Aberdeen administration. He adds, as he follows the history of the Palmerston Cabinet and the rapid secession from it of the Peelites, that when Lord Aberdeen retired finally from public life he had accomplished a great service to his country in making a fusion of parties possible, and that the greatest homage paid to his first Coalition Ministry lay in the subsequent events, which proved that no Government was possible except an almost complete reproduction of the one from which he had retired as Prime Minister.

For a short time Lord Aberdeen remained nearly as much occupied with public affairs as when Prime Minister. He knew the inner counsels of the Cabinet, and he saw despatches and letters from the Continent. It was not to last long. Palmerston tried to get a reversal of the vote on the Roebuck Enquiry, and Graham, Sidney Herbert, and Gladstone left the Cabinet. Lord Aberdeen thought them wrong, and approved of Argyll remaining, but though he retained his original opinions, which had made him exert his influence to form the Palmerston administration, he did not exert himself to prevent the Peelite secession.

Most of his intimate friends were now out of the Cabinet, but he continued in very confidential relations with Lord Clarendon, until after the rupture of the negotiations for peace which Lord John Russell had carried on at Vienna.

The peace of the world always concerned Lord Aberdeen and roused him to effort, but otherwise his retirement from office meant that he withdrew much of his interest in public life, and he concentrated

EFFIGIE SVA BENEVOLENTIÆ SIGNO  
HAS ÆDES EXORNAVIT  
MDCCCLV  
VICTORIA REGINA.



MARBLE BUST OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

(By Marachetti.)

Given by the Queen to Lord Aberdeen, who placed it at Haddo House, composing for it the Latin inscription which may be translated thus:

“ Queen Victoria, as a mark of gracious favour, adorned this house with her sculptural portrait, in the year 1855.”





himself on his estates, and his relations with his people and his family.

With the fate of the small party, then called the Peelites, he had something to say, and some influence to use. When most of them left the Palmerston administration they looked to him as still their head. He was strongly opposed to their continued existence. He urged that their views and their position had become merged in that of the Liberal party, and that the sooner this was recognised the better would it be, and that the Liberal party would gain greatly by their accession. In the general election of 1857 most of the Peelites lost their seats, and the recognition of the political facts, which he had urged since his own resignation, became patent by the condition of the party, which had always been more powerful in personality and in the traditions of its name than in the number of its following.

After the general election he wrote to Gladstone :

We must accustom ourselves to the conviction that there is no such thing as a distinctive Peelite party in existence. After Lord Derby's overthrow by a junction with the Liberal party, and the formation of a Government which recognised Parliamentary Reform as one of its fundamental measures, the whole relations of parties were changed, and I consider the amalgamation of Peel's friends with the Liberal party to have practically taken place.

Lord John's personal ambition and the discontent of the House of Commons at the conduct of the war, led to the overthrow of my Government and to the exclusion of myself and Newcastle, as well as Lord John himself. But the Government remained, for the most part composed of the same individuals; and although circumstances induced some of Peel's friends (whether wisely or not) to leave it, I do not see that they were thereby thrown any nearer to

Lord Derby and his party, or necessarily released from the Liberal policy to which they had recently adhered. They had simply acquired their independence.

For my own part, I am little more than a spectator; but I adhere to the declarations made on my assuming the Government.

I believe too that in this age of progress the Liberal party must ultimately govern the country; and I only hope that their supremacy may be established without mischief.

This proposition was stoutly contested by Gladstone. With much fluid circumnavigation of the state of parties, he set forth that if this were true, he (Gladstone) had been guilty of deceiving the world and his own constituency, and had indeed deceived himself.

These protests did not move Lord Aberdeen from his vantage ground of "Seer." He called on Gladstone to reflect that when the Aberdeen Ministry was formed the Peelites had amalgamated with the Liberal party :

This is so true that although frequently tormented by the personal waywardness of Lord John, the amalgamation was complete so long as the Government lasted.

You joined Palmerston's Government with reluctance; but you left it with Graham and Herbert on a ground entirely unconnected with Peelism, and on which any other three members of the Cabinet might with equal consistency have seceded. You remained on the Liberal side of the House, and did not declare any general hostility to the Government.

Now has anything happened essentially to alter your position? It is true that the House and the public determine to call you Peelites; and certainly I am the last man in the world to reject on your account

the honour and advantage of being friends of Sir Robert Peel; but your differences with the Government have no necessary connection with him or with his memory. You have opposed the Government, and may probably do so again, in the exercise of the freedom you have acquired; but it is as a Liberal; and I think something much more important must take place to justify crossing the House and entering the opposite camp.

Lord Aberdeen pointed out that a great measure of Reform was due from the Government. He foresaw Gladstone would differ in this from some of the Peelites. On the other hand, they would act together in foreign policy, retrenchment and economy. If any great difference should occur, let it be declared in the face of the House, and let it lead to its natural results.

It was Lord Aberdeen's influence which restrained Gladstone on more than one occasion from following the bent of his inclination, and throwing himself into the ranks of the Conservative party.

Before the General Election of 1857 an interview between Derby and Gladstone had been all but arranged, with a view to some concerted action when Parliament met.

Knowing this, Lord Aberdeen wrote to Gladstone :

I have told Graham he was too hasty in imagining that you had actually made up your mind, and that you would be found, at the opening of the session, seated on the front bench of the Opposition.

Aberdeen added that it was probable such a step would not be long delayed, but that much prudence and circumspection would be required on Gladstone's part before he arrived at such a decision.

As you agreed to join Palmerston after I had left, I think it will never do to attempt his overthrow



without some specific and assignable cause. Strong apprehensions of a mischievous policy, and general disapprobation and distrust will not be sufficient. It is probable that you will not have long to wait for more tangible grounds of action.

The foreign policy of the Government will bear its fruits. The Persian War, the oppression of Greece, our relations with Turkey, the execution of the Treaty of Paris, and the renewal of the Conferences, with many other questions, will furnish abundant matter of discussion and censure. This system of meddling and arrogance, by which we draw upon ourselves the hatred of the whole world, will infallibly render necessary great military establishments leading to enormous expense, and materially affecting the integrity of your financial policy of 1853. My advice, therefore, would be to remain perfectly passive for the present.

Your position in the House is very peculiar. With an admitted superiority of character, and of intellectual power, above any other member, I fear that you do not really possess the sympathy of the House at large, while you have incurred the strong dislike of a considerable portion of Lord Derby's followers. Your recent conduct in Parliament has not been fully understood; but it has been very unpopular, and any new course which is not perfectly intelligible and clearly justified by the necessity of the case will only add to this unpopularity.

I care little for the Government, and entertain the greatest apprehension of Palmerston's foreign policy. I have the highest admiration of Lord Derby's talents; but I see very much to lament in him, and still more in his friends.

You are the person to whose future I look forward with hope and confidence; and with so much to

command ultimate success, it cannot very long be delayed.

One other correspondence with a late colleague must be quoted. It roused Lord Aberdeen's sense of humour, and made him even more tolerant than he was before of the wayward moods and strange self-absorption of Lord John Russell.

On the retirement of the Peelites, Palmerston offered him the Colonial Secretaryship. This he accepted. On Lord John's return from Vienna he did not find his position more to his liking than that which he had held in the Aberdeen Cabinet. Then, he was leader in the Commons, and possessed of an influence in the House, and in the Government, which he might have made unbounded.

In the Palmerston Administration, he was no longer leader, he had no influence, and his recommendation of the Vienna terms had been completely set aside.

Dissatisfaction with him meant the endeavour to trip somebody up, and with apparent *insouciance* he paid Lord Aberdeen his first visit since he had left his Government. Lord Aberdeen recounted how with some bitterness he poured out his complaints against Palmerston and Clarendon, whom he accused of rejecting terms of peace which seemed good to him. He hoped Lord Aberdeen, for whom he professed great friendship, would help him to regain some of the influence he used to have, and push his policy. Lord Aberdeen's strong sense of humour was too much touched by the absurdity of the situation to feel the resentment which many men in such a position would have shown at being approached by the main instrument of his own overthrow; also he was too desirous to see peace restored to stand in its way.

He listened good-humouredly to Lord John, telling him that he should look to him as "the man of peace" *in the Cabinet*. He held out no hopes that he and Lord John would attempt together its reconstruction.

To Graham he wrote :

Lord John is indeed unfathomable. I know not which most to admire; his pacific language, or his attempt to maintain friendly relations with you. He might have made peace at Vienna; he was bound in honour to defend your Government, of which he remained a member till the eve of an attack, when he ran away leaving the door open for a triumphant entry of the enemy into the fortress. To talk of peace now, and to profess friendship and concert is absurd, but his present position is punishment as severe as an implacable adversary could desire.

Lord John paid Lord Aberdeen another visit, and was again bitter against his colleagues, but it was only in reply to a direct question in the Commons that he publicly avowed his approval of the Austrian proposals. To Gladstone, Aberdeen wrote :

Lord John has done many wonderful things; but I think the most wonderful of all is the course which he proposes to pursue, retaining the opinion he has expressed on the subject of peace and the Austrian proposal.

The Austrian proposals were rejected. The Vienna Conference came to a termination on June 5, and Lord John had returned in July. His conduct as British plenipotentiary there is no part of the history of the Aberdeen administration. Nothing became him better than his resignation, when, on the report of the Parliamentary Committee set up after the Roebuck vote, it was proposed, on the finding of that report, to censure the Aberdeen Cabinet Lord John would not consent to shelter himself by his resignation on the eve of the Roebuck motion. He again retired. Lord Aberdeen sums up his relations with the matter :



I had another pacific talk with Lord John cordial and friendly in manner, and even confidential. I will tell you more when we meet. He is an incomprehensible little man !

Sebastopol fell on September 8, 1855. Writing to Graham, Aberdeen said :

We must be anxious to see what effect will be produced by the late great success in the prospects of peace. Clarendon sent me the telegraphic intelligence of the fall of Sebastopol; he concluded his note by praying to God that it might facilitate the work of peace. I told him that I received his pacific ejaculation with almost as much pleasure as the intelligence itself.

I am quite ignorant of what is likely to be the effect in Russia of its fall. Princess Lieven thought it would not be favourable to peace, but I am rather inclined to a contrary opinion.

I do not know how we are inclined; but after all the "Times" seems determined to allow of no peace; and I greatly fear that the "Times" is master.

Ellice thinks that Palmerston having conquered "the Court, Lord John, the Peelites, and the Czar," will be desirous of making peace; but we must look to France as the quarter from which this question will be decided. I see no pacific intentions on the part of our Government when they address the public. There are some good symptoms in the country at large, which must improve; but Disraeli is evidently frightened.

In December he was summoned to Windsor, for the investiture of the King of Sardinia with the Garter. To Graham he reported :

I had a good deal of talk both with the Queen and

Prince yesterday evening. They were both more reserved than usual on the subject of the war, but I think there is a manifest change in their language. Without being positively pacific, they no longer deprecate the notion of peace.

The most remarkable incident of the evening, was my interview with the King of Sardinia. I suppose the Queen had said something to him about me, for, when the Prince introduced me, the King began with some very civil speeches, and then opened at once upon the subject of peace. He said he feared peace would be made. He was decidedly in favour of carrying on the war, that his only chance of gaining anything was by war, that he should be able to have an army of 100,000 men next year, and that he was desirous of commanding the Sardinian contingent himself. He abused Austria very stoutly, and said that hers was a "politique infame." Cavour, in more measured language, professed the same policy as his master. It is clear that something is expected in Italy to the advantage of Sardinia, as the result of the war.

With respect to the question of peace, all seems to depend on the disposition of Russia to accept the terms proposed by Austria.

In 1856, a short correspondence, and, on Gladstone's part, unusually condensed, took place between him and Lord Aberdeen. It illustrates so completely the two minds, that it is of interest.

Archdeacon Denison was on the eve of being condemned for certain doctrinal views by the Bishop's Court at Bath. Gladstone understood that one point of condemnation would be :

His profession of those principles which imply belief in the Eucharist as a substantive reality; I use the expression advisedly,—for the Eucharist, in the

character of a touching spectacle and emblem, requires no *belief*, and admits of none. . . .

My mind is quite made up, that if belief in the Eucharist as a reality is proscribed by law in the Church of England, everything I hold dear in life shall be given and devoted to the oversetting and tearing in pieces such law, whatever consequences, of whatever kind, may follow.

I do not know whether there is even one other person so similarly minded; and my intentions in the matter are in all likelihood infinitely insignificant except to myself, and to those whose tender and overflowing kindness may give them an interest in me. Among them you hold a place which leads me to make known to you first, the general direction of the course I mean to take, upon clear proof that the case *has arisen*; it being, to speak moderately—now probable that it may arise.

Lord Aberdeen answered that he had noticed the proceedings at Bath, and feared there would be much angry remonstrance. When in Office he had had several interviews with Archbishop Sumner, trying to get him to take no action against Archdeacon Denison. Aberdeen thought the Archbishop might have averted the deplorable scandal in the Church, but supposed he could not resist the pressure brought to bear on him:

But when once the matter was brought under discussion, it was scarcely possible for the Archbishop, by a formal decree, to sanction the preaching and doctrine of the Archdeacon.

I take for granted that the Articles admit of a great latitude of interpretation; but I think in framing them, the Church of England has attempted, for the sake of comprehension, to reconcile direct inconsistencies and clear contradictions.



The whole subject of the Eucharist is too mysterious and difficult for me to arrive at any positive conviction; but in a case of this kind, to inflict penalties upon a man for believing more than his neighbour, in a matter neither of them can comprehend, would amount to a tyranny, and I therefore deprecate the threatened eviction of the Archdeacon.

I entertain no unwillingness to agree with your belief in this difficult subject; but I do not feel myself constrained to do so, nor have I any clear warrant for so doing: it must be admitted too that your "substantive reality" might, without much difficulty, lead to the adoption of Roman Catholic tenets. I suppose that the Lutheran doctrine of what is called consubstantiation, would pretty nearly coincide with your views.

You say that you have made up your mind in the event of the threatened decision being pronounced; but I do not understand what practical course is indicated? To protest strenuously against a tyrannical decree may be quite justifiable, and even a duty; but to raise an abstract question of the degree and manner in which the "Real Presence" is to be understood and acknowledged, I think would lead to no good end.

I write in great ignorance on this subject; but it is one which defies the grasp of the most powerful intellect, and places us all nearly on a level.

Whatever you do will have my sympathy; this is a case in which, above all others, we can only be certain that we ought to have great charity one towards another.

Gladstone's answer was less in temperate, and therefore more obscure.

The Archdeacon unites fickleness with obstinacy in a greater degree than anyone I have ever heard.

The letter ends on a characteristic note :

The Homeric researches advance somewhat, if not wholly as I could wish : and probably by the end of the year I may be in a condition either to make a spoon or spoil a horn.

Aberdeen, to another correspondent, says : “ Gladstone comforts himself with Homer,” and commenting on some of Palmerston’s doings of which he entirely disagreed adds :

I am one of those who believe Palmerston may do anything with perfect impunity—should public disapprobation become more manifest, the early appointment of one or two Low Church Bishops will set all to rights.

During my stay at Windsor (Aberdeen writes again from London), I had frequent opportunities of speaking both to the Queen and Prince on the great subject of the moment. I should say that the Queen is still at heart warlike and desirous that the English Army should strike another blow and do something to acquire fresh reputation. But she has submitted, and no doubt honestly, to the conviction that negotiations for peace must now be seriously entertained.

The Prince is decidedly pacific, and is very much impressed with the necessity of taking advantage of the present opportunity. . . .

There is a great reluctance to grant an armistice ; but it would be too horrible not to do so if peace should be fairly in view.

If the war should unhappily continue there is no doubt that its seat will be transferred to the Rhine. This is admitted by everyone in France including the Emperor. Surely any peace would be preferable to such a calamity. On the whole, I am inclined to hope a good deal from the general feeling of the country.

Although rather disappointed at the prospect of peace, and perhaps preferring a continuance of the war, the people are beginning to be sensible of its burdens.

*April 29, 1856.*—Peace was proclaimed this morning by the heralds. It was slightly cheered at St. James's, and hissed at Temple Bar.

So writes Granville to Canning. There is no letter of Lord Aberdeen's on the event so ardently longed for by him. On March 20, he was at Windsor for the confirmation of the Princess Royal—the only person, except Palmerston and the Archbishop, who did not belong to the family. Granville says of the occasion: "Pam reminded Lord Aberdeen of their being confirmed at Cambridge as if it was yesterday." Lord Aberdeen notes a talk with the King of the Belgians: "He is of course greatly pleased with the peace, and seemed to think it was quite as necessary for this country as for France."

When peace came it caused him the liveliest pleasure. "He saw little to commend in the manner in which the foreign relations of the country were subsequently conducted."

In his declining years one subject roused in him acute interest, and that was the commencement of the Indian Mutiny.

It seems to me that a warlike and bloodthirsty spirit has been created in the country, mainly perhaps in consequence of the early termination of the Russian war, without our having achieved the brilliant success of our French allies.

We have now a more serious business on hand, and I think, after we have subdued the Indian Revolt, we shall have expended money and blood enough to keep us quiet for some time to come. . . .

The exhortations of our papers in recommending indiscriminate slaughter are abominable, but they are



also suicidal, for we could never long exist in India after having taken such means to create the most inveterate spirit of revenge.

I believe Canning has done well, at least I think that what the papers most blame is most to be approved. But how are we to govern this immense territory in future? The double Government seems to be doomed, but although this is very easy talking, the practical difficulties attending a transfer to the Queen are enormous.

#### TO MR. HUDSON GURNEY

I do not altogether agree with you in your estimate of public men, for I think Gladstone honest and able, and I do not think Lord John so dreadfully mischievous as you seem to apprehend. In truth, however, I am not bound to take up the cudgels for him. For he treated me very scurvily. I have, however, forgiven him, which it is now by no means a great effort to do, seeing that age and infirmity remove me from the possibility of any personal competition or interference with him, or anyone else.

The truth is that, although I hear a great deal of discussion and speculation amongst those who are deeply interested in the game of politics, I find myself becoming every day more and more of a spectator, and, although friends come frequently to ask advice, they cannot fully comprehend my comparative indifference to the questions at issue.

At all events they know that my opinion will be disinterested. . . .

Poor Canning, who had said a word to inculcate the necessity of something like justice, drew upon himself the abuse of our Press and the vituperation of the European settlers in India; especially the population of Calcutta. I hope the feeling there is a good deal

changed and the approbation of his conduct has become more general.

After all, we cannot expect justice in this world. I adhere to the declarations made on my assuming the Government. Bred at the feet of Gamaliel, if the recollection of Mr. Pitt did not prevent me from making any, I feel that I am too old to think of change.

Had the Derby Government been defeated in 1858 it was known that the Queen would have sent for Lord Aberdeen. The secession of the Peelites from the Palmerston Government had again made him the head of a small but most important party. It was equally well known that, though he might help to form a Cabinet, he would never again consent to head one. Only those who were in the inner circle knew how rapidly his strength was failing him, and two severe attacks of illness, the first in 1857, set a limit to his energies, and were but the the precursors of the end which was not far off.

The India Bills were the last in which he took an active part. His position had become that of a referee and confidant, whose advice was sought and listened to, who still took a lively interest in public affairs of real importance, but who was no longer concerned in party or personal conflicts.

His thoughts and affections turned increasingly to "the kindred points of heaven and home." Excepting for a few days in 1854, he had been absent from Haddo for three years, when he returned there in the summer of 1855.

Writing in that year to Lady Haddo, he says :

I wonder if you will recollect or know that next Sunday is my birthday. Although never formally observed by me it gives rise to awful recollections. During a long and eventful life the mercies of God have been great and innumerable, but I have also

been vexed with all his storms. May all turn to a good account.

"I don't know why I ever leave it," he says, as the doctors summon him away from the cold north, to be under their treatment.

He was visited by many friends. John Bright, who fishes incessantly but will not shoot. He takes Bishop Wilberforce to his northern fortress of Buchan Ness, and treats him to a wild storm raging over the cold North Sea. Guizot comes with his talk of Napoleon III, never a continental hero to Lord Aberdeen. He had written of their visit to Lady Haddo :

The Emperor and Empress of the French are also to arrive at Windsor. We are summoned for an Investiture of the Garter on the 28th. The Emperor will be introduced by Lord Ellesmere and me, as the junior knight which is a strange office for me to perform.

The whole history of this man is wonderful, more wonderful than fiction.

The prospects of Peace are not so good as they were. Indeed most people think that it is quite hopeless, but I will not despair. Much will depend on the real desire of the Emperor Napoleon.

Aberdeen had no more esteemed or honoured friend than Guizot, and the two old statesmen drove in Lord Aberdeen's pony carriage over many a mile of territory not perhaps as smiling in sunshine as the fair France of the great Frenchman. Graham and Gladstone with his family came later :

Gladstone left me in a state of doubt and excitement, but with no very definite projects or views. Lytton had written to propose some sort of special mission to the Ionian Islands, which rather pleased his fancy, probably from his Homeric tendencies.



Corfu is a delightful residence, and under an absolute Government a good deal might be done; with Gladstone's notions, I fear we shall make shipwreck, and do nothing to raise constitutional Government in the eyes of Europe. He will be too honest to play his part dexterously. He takes my son Arthur with him, which is like losing my right arm.

The Queen was never at Balmoral without summoning him for a few days' visit. He heard unreservedly from her and the Prince what was going on in foreign affairs.

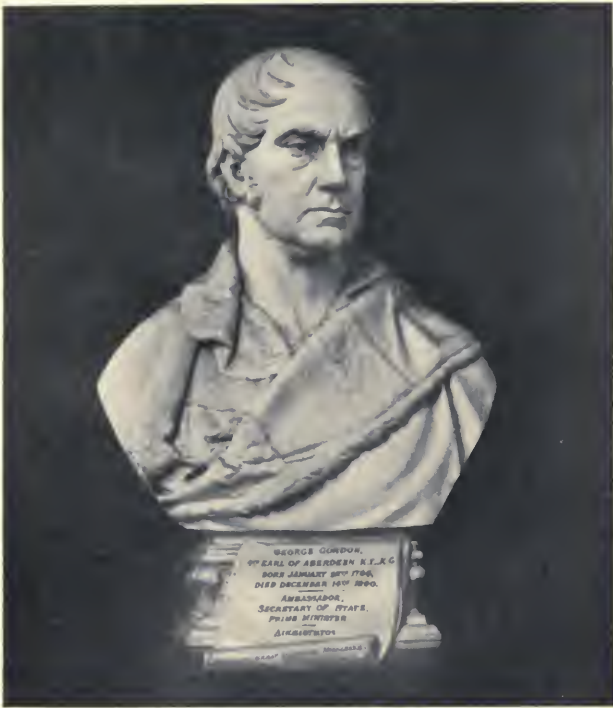
In 1857 the Queen intimated that she and the Prince would pay him a private visit at Haddo. He writes :

Granville is now with me here. He is well disposed, and has just views on foreign matters; but he is no match for Palmerston, and is too much of a courtier. I ought to be one myself, for after often talking of it, the Queen has now decided to come here the middle of next month, on her leaving Balmoral. Neither my house, nor habits, can be at all adapted to receive such a visit; but it has been offered in a very kind manner.

The visit of one night was a memorable one in the annals of Haddo. The mile-long approach to the house was lined with the tenants on horseback, who closed in behind the carriage in which the Queen was seated, and she was thus escorted to the house.

On the last occasion when the tenantry had so mustered, it was for the home-coming of Lord and Lady Haddo, who were now so much abroad, owing to Lord Haddo's anxious condition of health. Only Lord and Lady Abercorn, beside the immediate family, were present at Haddo. Of the visit Lord Aberdeen reports :

The visit passed off very prosperously. The Queen



**MARBLE BUST IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.**

Executed by Matthew Noble, the commission for which was given by a group of Lord Aberdeen's chief friends.

GEORGE GORDON, 4TH EARL OF ABERDEEN, K.G., K.T.  
Born January 28, 1784. Died December 14, 1860.  
Ambassador, Secretary of State, Prime Minister,  
ΔΙΚΑΙΟΤΑΤΟΣ



**RECUMBENT FIGURE, MARBLE, IN GREAT STANMORE CHURCH.**

Executed in Caen marble by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm, Bart., R.A., as commissioned by his grandson, John Campbell, 7th Earl of Aberdeen, and placed by him in Great Stanmore Church, Middlesex, where Lord Aberdeen is buried; in the Parish of which Bentley (otherwise Stanmore) Priory is situated, and both Lord Aberdeen's wives were interred in the same family vault.





was in great good humour, was very gracious, and expressed herself to be much pleased. Her Majesty was very much pleased with an address from my tenants, drawn up, and presented, entirely unknown to me, and which I have not yet seen. I attended her to Aberdeen, where her reception was enthusiastic. The purport of the address was to thank the Queen for the honour she was conferring on a proprietor, who was beloved as friend and benefactor over a wide area of Aberdeenshire.

Shortly after this visit Lord Aberdeen was seized with an attack of illness, which was but the first symptom of the complete break-up of his health. To his friend Gurney, writing in November, he says :

My progress is slow, but it seems to be pretty well assured. The doctors always make a point of pretending to assign the cause of such attacks, which in fact is utterly beyond their power; but whatever may have been the origin of my illness, I must entirely acquit the Queen's visit of any share in the mischief. I was very little put out of my usual habits, and the whole affair was a source of universal pleasure.

In November of 1858, in obedience to the doctors, he moved south from Haddo, "contrary to my judgment for I cannot imagine that anything can be better than the season here at this time." After reaching London, he grimly reports that he is writing after breakfast "with candles in the room which the doctors wish to persuade me is coming to a better climate!"

A relative, with more courage than observation, questioned him in the language of the period on the grounds of his faith. The good intention was recognised and Lord Aberdeen replying, wrote thus :

I have always endeavoured, very imperfectly I

admit, to regulate my conduct and belief, according to the precepts of the Christian religion.

The precise amount of faith must necessarily vary in different persons, according to their individual character, and their respective capacities. The essential object is, to look at everything with a humble, teachable and impartial spirit. I can only say with the Saint of old "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." Probably, we may all of us, with good reason, put up this prayer.

I know there is much goodness and much genuine religion in the world, and have seen it and appreciate it most fully. But, the language and conduct of what is usually called the religious world, is not encouraging. If it did not excite pity, it could only produce disgust. Every man must bear his own burden, and I presume to judge no man. At my age and in my situation, I naturally look at those subjects with increased awe and reverence, and with many failings and short-comings, I must still endeavour to do my best.

After the autumn of that year (1855) he was never the same again. Slowly but surely his strength declined, and it was obvious that his days were numbered.

Two more autumns he spent at Haddo, moving among the trees he had planted, and which had become forests in his day. The "stateliest oak" among them all was to fall. As autumn's fiery finger touched them to ruddy gold, he took his leave of his ancestral home. Probably none knew better than himself that he was nearing the Unseen, where all that he had loved best on earth had long been gathered.

On December 14, 1860, he died, surrounded by his children and step-children. His eldest son, Lord Haddo, and the daughter cherished in his deepest

affections, alone were absent. Lord Haddo was in Egypt stricken by the mortal disease which was to end his life in less than four years. They laid Aberdeen in the ruins of the old Church of Stanmore, by the side of those to whom his heart had been faithful through the long years. He lies in England, which had nurtured his youth, filling him with the grace and cultivation of all that was best in her midst. It was a rich heritage that this son of Scotland took back when he decided to return to the home that had been his father's for five hundred years. He gave it of the best of his life.

Over the open grave Bishop Wilberforce read the service and afterwards wrote to his son :

I am most thankful I was with you at Stanmore, not only because I should ever after have so lamented my absence, but also because I would not for anything have missed that last and most impressive sight, which now is engraven in my memory for ever: Graham's tall kingly figure, with the snow falling on his head and his full countenance; Gladstone with his face *speaking*; Newcastle, you; and the light *within* that vault, and all that belonged to its opening and its closing.

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At the end of one of the forest vistas that lead from Haddo House, there stands a storied Urn bearing the inscription

“ HAUD IMMÉMOR ”

During its erection the old statesman was watching the workmen, as they placed the monument on the site he had chosen for it. One of the masons, saluting the still figure, asked him the meaning of the Inscription,



"That is for the learned," was the answer he received. It was a reply to a question that could not be answered, and Lord Aberdeen knew his countryman too well to fear that his reserve would be misinterpreted. Rather, would he understand it better than any translation.

Only the learned in the school of life could interpret the hidden meaning of the epitaph. For himself he had passed—

Through the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd;  
Shall find the toppling Craggs of Duty, scaled,  
Are close upon the shining tablelands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.  
Such was he : His work is done.

A man of rare fidelity, and warm affections, his devotion to his Queen and country had involved him in a policy which was not his own. It had brought war instead of peace as the fruit of his Administration. When at last peace came, he had no part in directing its course. "Submission to the will of God, I believe to be the most difficult and is also the most indispensable of Christian duties." So he wrote, and so he felt. It was his review of what is called "his fall," but which in many cases, as in his, means possessing the soul in peace.

He will live for ever in the story of the Prime Ministers of this country as one who feared God, honoured the Sovereign, loved Justice, and sought Mercy.

## APPENDIX

SOME of his [Lord Aberdeen's] great qualities (wrote Mr. Gladstone), adorned him in common with several, or even with many, contemporary statesmen; such as clearness of view, strength of the deliberative faculty, strong sense of duty to the Crown, and the most thorough and uncompromising loyalty to his friends and colleagues. . . . But if I have said that he had much in common with other distinguished men, it has been by way of preface to what I have now to say, namely, that what has ever struck me most in his character as a whole was its distinctiveness. There were several mental virtues that he possessed in a degree very peculiar; there were, I think, one or two in which he stood almost alone. . . . I will name the following characteristics, one and all of which were more prominent in him than in any public man I ever knew: mental calmness; the absence (if for want of better words I may describe it by a negative) of all egotism; the love of exact justice; a thorough tolerance of spirit; and last, and most of all, an entire absence of suspicion. There was something very remarkable in the combination of these qualities as well as in their separate possession. Most men who might be happy enough to have one-half of his love of justice would be so tossed with storms of indignation at injustice as to lose the balance of their judgment. But he had, or seemed to have, all the benefit, all the ennobling force of strong emotion, with a complete exemption from its dangers. His mind seemed to move in an atmosphere of chartered tranquillity, which allowed him the view of every object, however blinding to others, in its

true position and proportion. . . . I feel that I cannot by any effort do justice to what I have termed his finely shaded character; . . . but I cannot stop without saying a word on the quality which I regard as beyond all others his own; I mean the absence from his nature of all tendency to suspicion. Those who have read his State papers, and admired their penetrating force and comprehensive scope, will not misunderstand me when I say that he was in this respect a little child, not from defect of vision but from thorough nobleness of nature. This entire immunity from suspicion, which makes our minds in general like a haunted place, and the sense of the immunity that he conveyed to his friends in all his dealings with them, combined with the deep serenity of his mind, which ever seemed to beguile and allay by some kindly process of nature excitement in others, gave an indescribable charm to all intercourse with him in critical and difficult circumstances. Hence perhaps in great part, and not merely from his intellectual gifts, was derived the remarkable power he seemed to me to exercise in winning confidences without seeking to win them; and, on the whole, I believe that this quality, could we hold it as it was held in him, would save us from ten erroneous judgments for one into which it might lead. For the grand characteristic of suspicion after all, as of superstition, is to see things as they are not. . . . Lord Aberdeen was not demonstrative. He was unstudied in speech, and it is of interest to inquire what it was that gave such extraordinary force and impressiveness to his language. He did not deal in antithesis. His sayings were not sharpened with gall. In short, one might go on disclaiming for him all the accessories to which most men who are impressive owe their impressiveness. Yet I never knew anyone who was so impressive in brief utterances conveying the sum of the matter. . . . It is no reproach to other statesmen of this or of other periods to say that scarcely any of them have had a celebrity so entirely unaided by a transitory glare. But if this be so, it



implies that while they for the most part must relatively lose, he must relatively and greatly gain. If they have had stage-lights, and he has had none, it is the hour when those lights are extinguished that will for the first time do that justice between them which he was too noble, too far aloft in the tone of his mind, to desire to anticipate. All the qualities and parts in which he was great were those that are the very foundation-stones of our being; as foundation-stones they are deep, and as being deep they are withdrawn from view; but time is their witness and their friend, and in the final distribution of posthumous fame Lord Aberdeen has nothing to forfeit, he has only to receive. I see, on perusing what I have written, that in the endeavour to set forth the virtues and great qualities of Lord Aberdeen, I seem more or less to disparage other men, including Sir Robert Peel, whom he so much esteemed and loved. I had no such intention, and it is the fault of my hand, not of my will. He would not have claimed, he would not have wished or borne, that others should claim for him superiority, or even parity in all points with all his contemporaries. But there was a certain region of character that was, so to speak, all his own; and there other men do seem more or less dwarfed beside him. In the combination of profound feeling with a calmness of mind equally profound, of thorough penetration with the largest charity, of the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, in the total suppression and exclusion of self from his reckonings and actions—in all this we may think him supreme, and yet have a broad array of good and noble qualities in which he may have shared variously with others. There are other secrets of his character and inner life into which I do not pretend to have penetrated. It always seemed to me that there was a treasure-house within him, which he kept closed against the eyes of men.

## SOME PERSONAL TOUCHES

*(Contributed by the Marquis of Aberdeen)*

THE austerity—and even coldness—which was widely attributed to the subject of this Memoir, has been shown, by various incidental passages, in the course of the narrative, to have been far from representing his real disposition.

But a few further extracts from his personal correspondence may not unsuitably be added, by way of revealing something of that warmth of affection and sympathy which so much endeared him to his own family circle and intimate friends.

Most of the following extracts are taken from letters addressed to his daughter-in-law, Lady Haddo.

*Blair Castle, Sept. 12, 1844.*

. . . . King Louis Philippe is to be in England on the 9th of October, but (as to my subsequent movements) a good deal will depend on you. I think that I will not go to Haddo without you; but if you should be there, and it should be in my power to leave London, I do not much care what the season may be. . . .

*Blair Castle, Sept. 18, 1844.*

. . . I like her much, and think she seems a very nice person—quiet, sensible, and cheerful; rather shy, but not awkward. Altogether, a person such as may be especially met with in Scotland, with engaging manners, and remarkably pleasing expression. She puts me a little, and but a little, in mind of you; but little as it is, perhaps it is that which has constituted her charm in my eyes. . . .

*Argyll House, Dec. 30, 1850.*

I will not attempt to describe how much your letter has affected me. You will believe how fully I share your anxiety, and how impatiently I shall wait to receive to-morrow morning a confirmation of the improvement which you announce to have taken place yesterday.

I am glad that you have seen Professor Syme, as it must have given you some comfort and confidence. It is quite right to employ all human means of help; and in this case we may reasonably hope that they will be attended with success; but after all, the fate of our dear child is in the hands of God; and we must humbly pray that it may be consistent with divine wisdom and mercy that his life should be spared. . . .

*Argyll House, Dec. 31, 1850.*

Your letter this morning has greatly relieved me; for although your account yesterday was favourable, I could not help feeling very anxious. In fact, I breakfasted this morning at eight o'clock, and had all my things packed, with the carriage at the door, ready to start for the station if your letter had contained a bad account. It is true, that I could have done no good; but in such a case I should have wished to mingle my tears with your own. Your hopes and comfort, I can share at a distance.

May God bless the means employed for the perfect recovery of our dear child! . . .

*Haddo House, Aug. 31, 1852.*

. . . This morning George had her and James harnessed, and was driving them as if it had been his daily custom for a month!

We had an addition of juvenile visitors yesterday, equally unexpected. Madame Gudin had volunteered a visit with a Mr. and Mrs. Errington, whom I had never seen, but said nothing of a child. She appeared, leading one in her hand; but I found there were two more in the carriage! . . .

*Haddo House, Sep. 8, 1852.*

. . . It is most probable that you will have no letter from this place to-day; and although very little in the frame of mind myself for writing, I think you will be glad to know that the children all departed about an hour ago in high health and spirits. The day is most beautiful, and as they are to sail this evening at eight o'clock, I hope you may have them pretty early at Greenwich on Friday.

It would be foolish to say how much I feel their departure, and how greatly I regret it; but you have been very kind to let them stay so long. It has made my last six weeks very happy. . . .

I thought you would like to know that up to the last moment here, everything was prosperous and happy; and I am not in the vein for saying more. Indeed it is with a heavy heart that I have now written. . . .

*Haddo House, Sep. 13, 1852.*

(*After the children had gone, as mentioned in previous letter*). . . . I suppose George has given you full accounts of his performance in fishing, in which he seems likely to become a proficient. You may tell him that I look for his merry face every morning in the garden, at our usual place of meeting before breakfast. . . .



*Argyll House, Feb. 13, 1853.*

. . . I fear that I shall not be able to go to you to-day; but as I have heard nothing of poor little Johnny since you wrote on Wednesday, I wish to know how he is going on. I wish also to know if any of the other children have taken the measles, and how you all are. . . .

*Argyll House, March 9, 1853.*

. . . You may perhaps write to-day; but I send this in order to have some certain intelligence of dear little Harriet. You know all I feel for her, and also for you, too well to make it necessary for me to say more, even if I had time to do so.

May God bless you! . . .

*Argyll House, March 22, 1853.*

. . . I must find a moment to tell you, although I know it is unnecessary for me to do so, how much I feel for all your anxieties, and how truly I share in all your interest for the dear little child. Most earnestly do I pray that your good account to-day may be confirmed.

I could not get to you on Sunday, although my carriage was at the door for nearly three hours, in the hope of my being able to do so. We have had one alarm of serious events in the East which required much consultation. I hope it may blow over; but matters are threatening, and great prudence is necessary, which I am sorry to say is not always to be found where it is most wanted. . . .

*Downing Street, Oct. 25, 1854.*

. . . Poor little Harriet, with her speaking eyes, looks at me from the mantelpiece on which you placed her picture.

On Sunday, I went to Mr. Powles's Chapel. He did not preach; but the pew had more attraction for me than Mr. Powles. . . .

(TO LADY HADD0, WHILE IN EGYPT.)

*Argyll House, Nov. 8, 1854.*

MY DEAREST MARY,

. . . I hope you continue to find some amusement in the novelty of all you see. How did you like the Vice Roy's wife? I need not ask her how she liked you; for with you, I think all nations and all ranks would be the same. You are one of those happy natures whom *when the eye sees, then it blesses!* I bless you with my whole heart. . . .

*Argyll House, Christmas Day, 1854.*

. . . Notwithstanding our separation, you will not be forgotten to-day. I am able to transport myself to you in imagination, and see you as clearly and as vividly as if really in your presence. I can hear your sweet voice, and feel all the influence of your gentle goodness.

Is not this wonderful? Surely there must be something divine in a faculty like this. You will also often think of us to-day, and I well know with what feelings you will do it. . . .

*(Visit to Crystal Palace)*

*Argyll House, April 25, 1855.*

. . . Although the gardens are unfinished, and the building not half fitted, it is wonderfully fine, and very striking.

You may tell Mary that I was as much moved, and affected, by a fine Band suddenly playing *Annie Laurie* as by anything I saw. Such is the power of association! . . .

*Argyll House, May 9, 1855.*

. . . I have nothing further now to say, except to express the joy with which I shall go to meet you at Southampton. If the mercy of God should be continued, and bring you happily there again, what a difference it will be, from our dreadful time of parting! The thought of it already fills my eyes with tears of joy. . . .

Dearest, Dearest Mary,

Ever your most affecte.

ABERDEEN.

*H. H., Sep. 21, 1855.*

. . . I will take care to secure George his passage on Wednesday next; and I am most thankful that you have allowed him to stay so long. His visit has been quite delightful to me; and I shall miss him very much when he is gone. With all his high spirits he is remarkably considerate. I had a proof of this the other day when he received permission to take six shots. He was very eager about it, and I offered to write to request that this number might be a little increased; but on reflection, he told me not to do so, as he thought that his Papa might be displeased. In the meantime, he is very happy, and quite well. . . .

*H. H., Sep. 26, 1855.*

. . . I cannot help writing a line also, to tell you that George went this morning at nine o'clock in perfect health and spirits. . . . He has been very happy here; and I can truly say that his departure has left a sad blank. His intelligence, cheerfulness, and constant good humour made him a delightful companion; and I should have loved him, even if he had been a stranger. I will be glad to know that you find him looking well on his return. . . .

*Extract from a letter to a friend, from Lord Aberdeen, evidently written soon after his son's marriage.*

. . . My son and his wife, I am afraid, will leave me about the end of next week. She is quite charming. There is an honesty, a candour about her, that is absolutely irresistible. From some vague prepossession in her favour, I was determined to like her; but to tell you the truth, I never expected to like any one so well again; and from my connection with her, and the charm of her society, I look forward to more happiness than I ever hoped to enjoy.

I trust my son will prove himself worthy of her, and that he is fully sensible of his great good fortune.

You know well, that if ever any man had a right to be fastidious in his estimate of female character, I am that person. Such praise from me therefore, is no light matter. I hope she knows that in anything and everything, in which I can promote her happiness, she may safely rely upon me. . . .

*Lines written by the late Mrs. Harriet Hamilton King.*

O noble soul ! that in dark days of doom  
 Stood at the helm, and flinched not from the storm ;  
 That out of seas of sorrow rose a rock  
 Whereon the weaker spirits refuge found.  
 One read thy heart aright, Victoria, Queen.  
 All falsehood fell abashed, she knew thy worth,  
 And held it as her treasure :—and those most  
 Who knew thee best reposed their trust in thee.  
 Thou didst not see nor find a fleeting breath  
 Of popular applause : thy only path  
 Was duty, wheresoever that might lie,  
 In thorny ways or rough :—foreseeing far,  
 Thy only aim was for the world's wide peace.  
 The welfare of all peoples ;—and thy heart  
 Bled, even to dying, with the cruelties  
 Of war, forced on thee, trapped by subtler men  
 In thy own truth and singleness of soul.



I speak not of thy learning, nor thy lore  
Of Nature, nor the hidden wealth of mind,  
So many-sided no one knew the whole.  
And of thy tenderness it were not well  
To speak, for that is sacred to the dead.  
But for thy truth, no one who ever heard  
Thy voice could doubt it, nor thy plighted word :  
Thy yea was yea, thy nay was nay indeed.  
And for thy honour and thy loyalty,  
Who now is living with so white a shield ?

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GILBERT, SIR JOHN. In a group of the Aberdeen Cabinet, deciding on the Expedition to the Crimea, 1854: National Portrait Gallery.

Stipple engraving,  $17\frac{1}{2} \times 26\frac{3}{8}$  in., by William Wilkins, 1857.

GORDON, SIR JOHN WATSON. Full-length: in the Town Hall, Aberdeen.

Mezzotint:  $24 \times 14\frac{1}{2}$  in., by E. Burton, 1853.

LAWRENCE, SIR THOMAS. Bust; exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1808. Now at Haddo House.

LAWRENCE, SIR THOMAS. Half-length: exhibited in the Royal Academy, 1831. Originally in the Peel Collection: now owned by Lord Cowdray.

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MAYALL. Photograph, 1855.

Shows Aberdeen seated in a chair. Engraved,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  in., by D. J. Pound, 1860: forms the frontispiece to Lord Stanmore's Life.

**PARTRIDGE, JOHN.** Portrait, painted 1846.

In the National Portrait Gallery. Partridge also painted Aberdeen in the group of 28 men at the meeting of the Royal Fine Arts Committee, the original being in the National Portrait Gallery. Often reproduced.

**WILKIE, SIR DAVID.** *In* the group of Queen Victoria presiding at her first Cabinet, 1837.

Engraved,  $22\frac{1}{4} \times 34$  in., by C. Fox, and published 1846. A reproduction appears in "*Les Lettres et les Arts*": Paris (June, 1887), ii, 287.

**WIVELL, ABRAHAM.** Half-length, looking to left.

Engraved,  $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  in., by Carl Mayer, for the "*Almanach de Gotha*," 1845.

Engraved,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  in., by W. Roffe, in Ewald's "*Beaconsfield and his Times*."

Engraved,  $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$  in., by T. Woolnoth, in Jerdan's "*National Portrait Gallery*."

**WONDER, PETER CHRISTOPH.** In the group of "*Patrons and Lovers of Art during the reign of George IV.*"

Painted in 1826 to the commission of Gen. Sir John Murray. In the National Portrait Gallery.





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